JUNE 1966

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-ONE, NUMBER SIX

AN AGENDA FOR AMERICAN LIBERALS

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy: Norman Cohn

SCIENCE AND THE COMMON READER: Eric Larrabee

THE MURDER OF RABBI ADLER: T. V. LoCicero

KENNEDY AS STATESMAN: George Kateb

THE APOCALYPTIC TEMPER: Robert Alter

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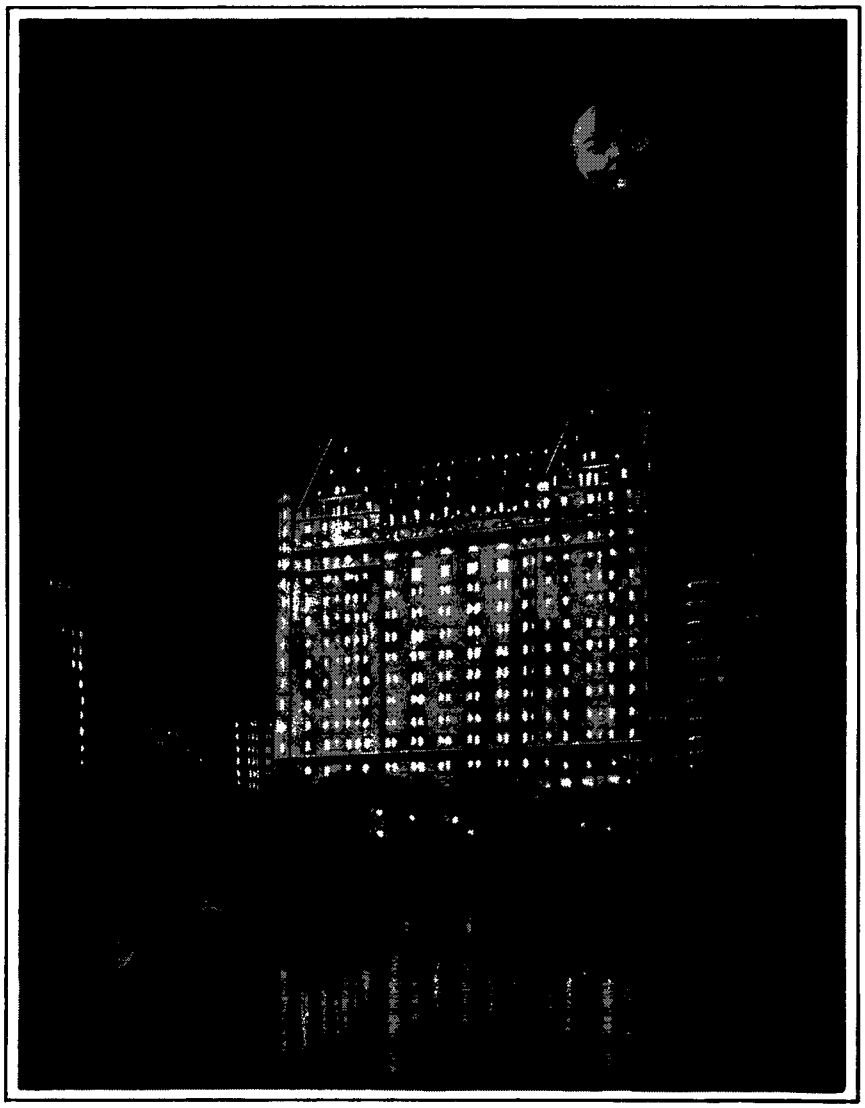

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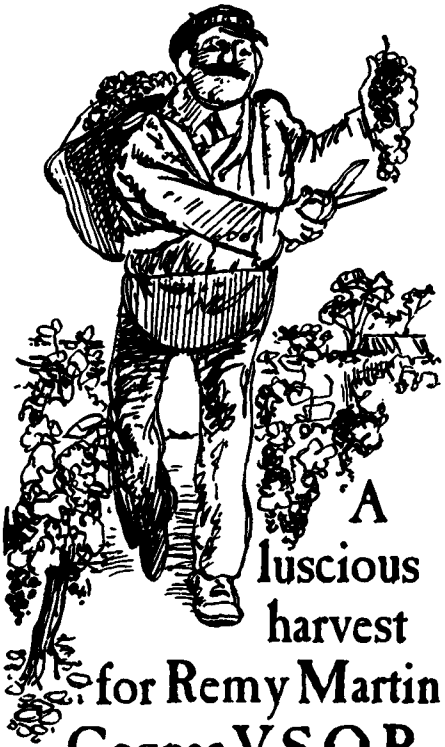

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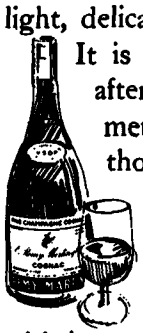

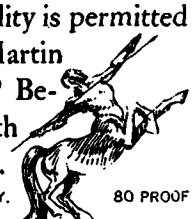

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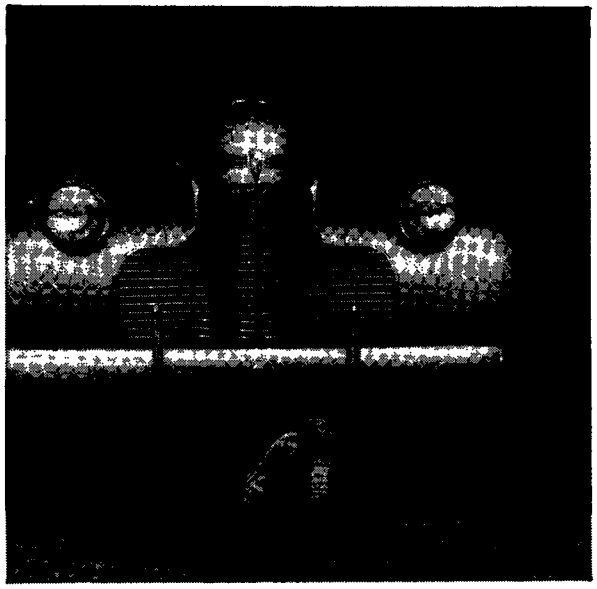

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Commentary

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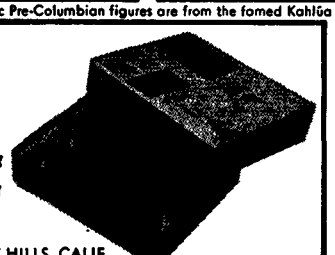

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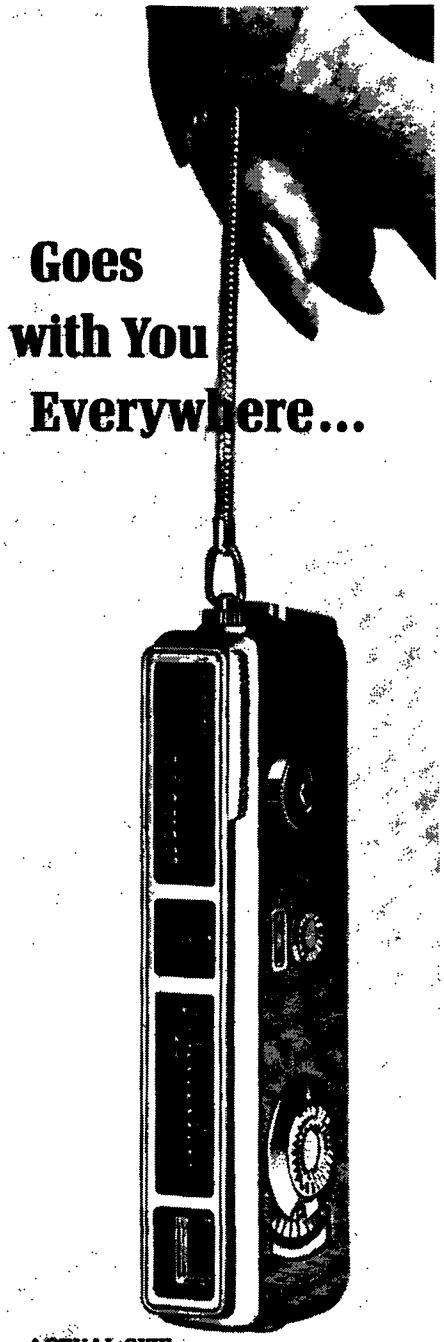

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Israel & the Arabs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I consider myself as avid a Zionist as lives off the fat of the *galut,* I cannot, in good conscience, let some of Marie Syrkin's specious arguments continue to plug up Israel's deaf ear to the Arab refugees. ["The Arab Refugees: A Zionist View," January]. Regardless of who bears the ultimate responsibility for the mass exodus of Arabs from Jewish Palestine in 1948, no one questions the fact that they were frightened and behaved like frightened people. What rankles is that *they weren't permitted to return to their homes,* regardless of their reasons for leaving. Moreover, Israel has gained at the refugees' expense; she has profited from Arab properties and efforts without even offering seriously to provide compensation to the great number of Arab non-combatant civilians whose possessions were confiscated. As of 1963, it was estimated that two-thirds of the occupied housing units in Israel had previously belonged to dispossessed Arabs.

Granting that Arab leaders want to perpetuate political tension with Israel, it only becomes more apparent that Israel, if she really wants peace, cannot wait for Arab initiatives. Moreover, the most compelling anti-Israeli issue in the Arab world (or elsewhere, for that matter) is the refugee issue. Neither Israel nor world Zionism, however, has ever assumed any meaningful responsibility for the refugees' deprivation of homes and livelihoods, nor, to further the cause of peace, have we ever seriously offered to shoulder any part of the burden of compensating refugees for what Israel did, in fact, expropriate, albeit for the welfare of others dispossessed.

Ultimately, time is *not* on the side of Israel; tempers are *not* cooling; the refugees increase daily; a refugee gospel has arisen and gains adherents; the Arabs grow strong while feeding their anger on an injustice we blithely dismiss. Unless we Zionists make a sincere effort—which we haven't—to offer the Arab refugees a choice between fair compensation for real losses, and resettlement in Israel (which few Arabs seem likely to choose) there will be no peace. We Jews in and out of Israel, with per capita incomes enormously higher than the Arabs', can afford to make restitution to people who will *always* be our next-door neighbors. Encircled by all the Arab world, Israel cannot afford *not* to make at least some sincere efforts at restitution. . . .

ROBERT S. GOLDMAN
New Orleans, Louisiana

MISS SYRKIN writes:

There is no point in my repeating the arguments I made in regard to the repatriation of the Arab refugees and the justice of the Arab case. However, there are factual errors in Mr. Goldman's letter which I would like to note. When Mr. Goldman writes, "they aren't permitted to return to their homes," he fails to mention the 45,000 Arab refugees who were allowed to return to Israel under the Family Reunion Plan.

When Mr. Goldman writes that "as of 1963, it was estimated that two-thirds of the occupied housing units in Israel had previously belonged to dispossessed Arabs," one wonders who did the estimating. The absurdity of the figure is self-evident to anyone even vaguely familiar with Israel's rate of growth in population and housing since 1948. According to official sources, of 778,204 arrivals during 1948-1955, some 123,763 (15.9 per cent) were absorbed in "abandoned localities." Since 1948, nearly 600,000 new dwelling units have been built by public and private agencies. By 1963, the rate of occupation of abandoned Arab housing obviously declined greatly from the figure of 15.9% in 1955. This is a far cry from "two-thirds."

Mr. Goldman charges that Israel has not offered "seriously to provide compensation." Israel has repeatedly offered to compensate Arab refugees for abandoned lands and property. In 1961, Foreign Minister Golda Meir told the UN General Assembly that Israel was prepared to enter upon compensation negotiations despite the Arab boycott and other hostile acts. In the recent 1965 UNRWA debate, Ambassador Comay again offered "generous provisions for compensation and property claims." Perhaps by "seriously" Mr. Goldman means that Israel should make no counter-claims for the value of the

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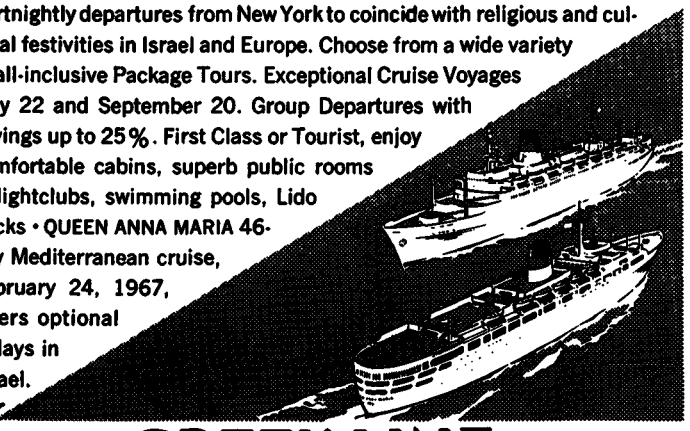
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property of the 550,000 Jewish refugees who fled from Arab countries and were resettled in Israel. Even were this unilateral concept of justice accepted by Israel, the Arabs show no inclination to negotiate, for political reasons with which Mr. Goldman appears to be familiar.

I agree with Mr. Goldman that "a refugee gospel has arisen." I tried to show that it was a false gospel, preached in cynical disregard of the rights of Israel and of the Arab refugees, whose normal resettlement is deliberately prevented by Arab governments dedicated to the destruction of Israel. The Arab refugee problem is the result, not the cause, of Arab belligerence. Once this is understood, perhaps the "gospel" will find fewer adherents.

The Rosenberg Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading Alexander M. Bickel's review of Walter and Miriam Schneir's book, *Invitation to an Inquest,* [January] made my eyes stretch so wide that I must write this in order to get them back to normal.

The book demonstrates that three people gave false testimony against the Rosenbergs. Mr. Bickel writes, ". . . concerted and consistent perjury on the part of a number of people is a rare occurrence." Where has he been all these years, in outer space? A man who presumes to be qualified to judge a book about an important case and trial should know that collusive perjury is a chronic problem in all courts, criminal and civil, and always has been.

Mr. Bickel writes, "Harry Gold was a curious little character, quite capable of lying." Capable? The book tells how, testifying in another case two years after the Rosenbergs were executed, Gold was asked, "You lied for a period of six years?" and he replied, "I lied for a period of sixteen years, not alone six."

Mr. Bickel writes, ". . . apparently Miss Bentley was also—capable of lying, that is. . . ." Apparently? Her status as an incorrigible liar was completely established in a lengthy brief supplied in 1955 by William Henry Taylor to the International Organizations Employees Loyalty Board—quoted in the book.

I could go on for pages. One more example: Mr. Bickel's breezy

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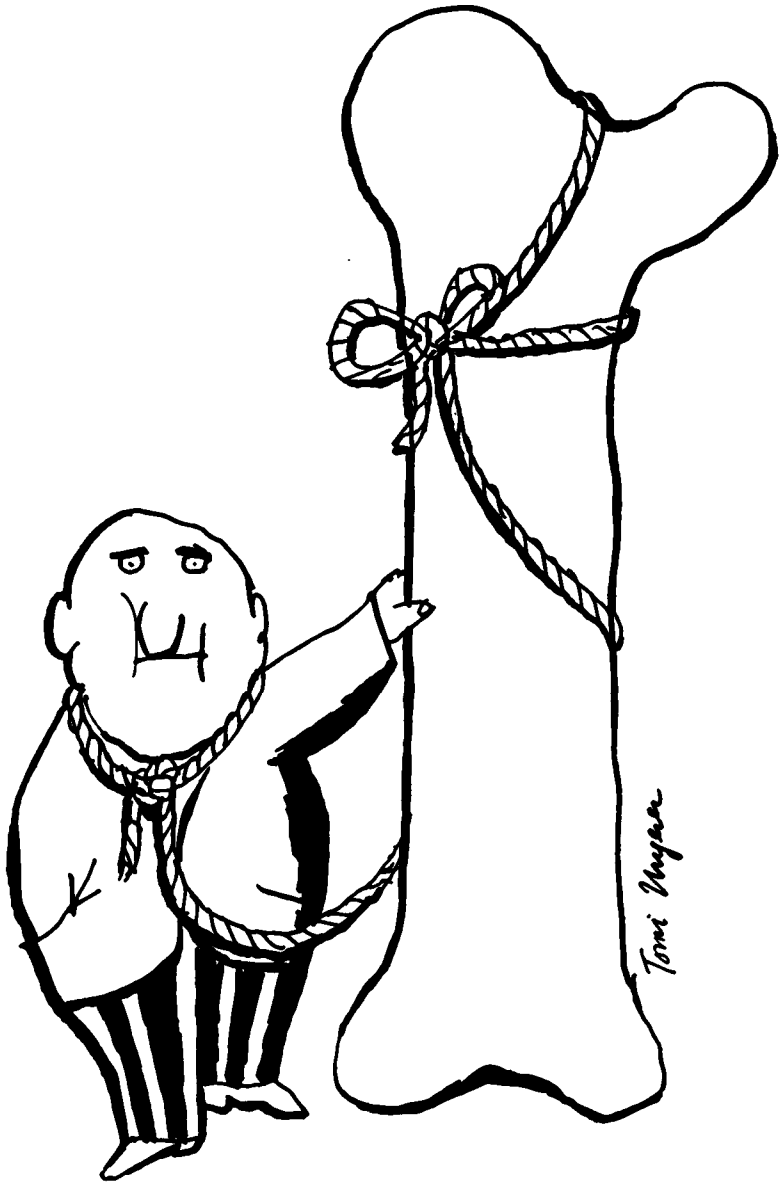

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alexander Bickel's review is an . . . attempt to write off the very disagreeable implications of the book. Mr. Bickel broaches the crucial thesis in his opening sentence when he writes that the Rosenberg case "wasn't the Dreyfus, the Mooney, the Sacco-Vanzetti case of the 50's." I should like to inquire why not. The social and political conditions surrounding those notorious prosecutions were not materially different from the atmosphere prevailing in the fateful and tortured 50's. The parallels are close: a superheated nationalism, a society terrified by alleged radical subversion, and a paranoid search for foreign agents. Professor Bickel implies that of course those older cases were *true* political trials, but that it is "intemperate" to suggest the same for the Rosenberg case. This is not only unsupported by anything in the review, but flies in the face of historical evidence to the contrary. And the Schneirs have amassed enough of such historical material, through the contemporary press, and other public documents, to more than merit serious consideration of their allegations of a politically inspired "frameup". . . . The Rosenberg trial was loaded with so-called motivation evidence, linking them with leftist ideology, Communism, and Front-organization causes. Elizabeth Bentley . . . was dragged in to supply some of the foggiest and most irrelevant evidence. Mr. Bickel prefers to regard her as "rather odd and extremely disagreeable"—and that's all! . . . However, Professor Bickel obviously cannot tolerate even the *possibility* of a frameup. It runs counter to the deep-seated conviction that somehow the U.S. government is inherently incapable of such perfidy. . . . Yet at this moment our whole system of justice under law is being undermined by Southern juries, who, under the stress of the civil-rights struggle, are incapable of rendering objective judgment. *Any* society can lend itself to a betrayal of its own highest principles, if the terror and the fear become intense enough. The political climate of the late 40's and early 50's was *at least* as fear-ridden as anything now corroding the moral perspective of the citizens of Haynesville.

Apparently what further dissuades Mr. Bickel from accepting the frameup thesis, is his conviction that, though diligent in their research, the Schneirs fail to produce any evidence that substantially discredits the Gold-Greenglass testimony, and fail to support their allegations of perjury and forgery. He cites three salient features of the authors' arguments, but strikingly omits a complete account of this material, which, in my view, is rather devastating.

The Schneirs do an exhaustive research job on the career of Gold through trial and pretrial statements and recordings. They demonstrate many significant contradictions that cannot be simply attributed to faulty memory, or distant events. . . .

For example, an important point of Gold's story has to do with the password "Julius sent me." This is a crucial link between Gold and Rosenberg and the only overt act of espionage in the indictment. Yet it is curious that *all* of the agents ever mentioned by Gold in recounting his espionage activities had a code name or alias. . . . Why does a real name suddenly appear in a mission frought with passwords, jello boxes, and elaborate planning for dissimulation? And this "real" name is of the alleged mastermind of the ring, to boot! . . .

As to the inconsistently dated Hilton Hotel card, Mr. Bickel dismisses the Schneirs' allegation of forgery as being the "poorest possible explanation." But the authors bring to light the following: the card was presented at the trial in *photostatic* form, despite the fact that the "original" was in the government's possession for many months. Why? One consequence is that the original is now unavailable for public examination, whereas it would otherwise be available with all other trial exhibits. Further, the card was never initialed by FBI agents or given a case number designation, again as with other exhibits, and according to standard FBI practice. And finally, the photostat card was examined by an expert with the Massachusetts police, and the conditional verdict (in the absence of the original) is that the card probably is a forgery. . . .

Professor Bickel glosses over the fact that Gold's original story told to the FBI, without counsel, and over a period of many days, lacks

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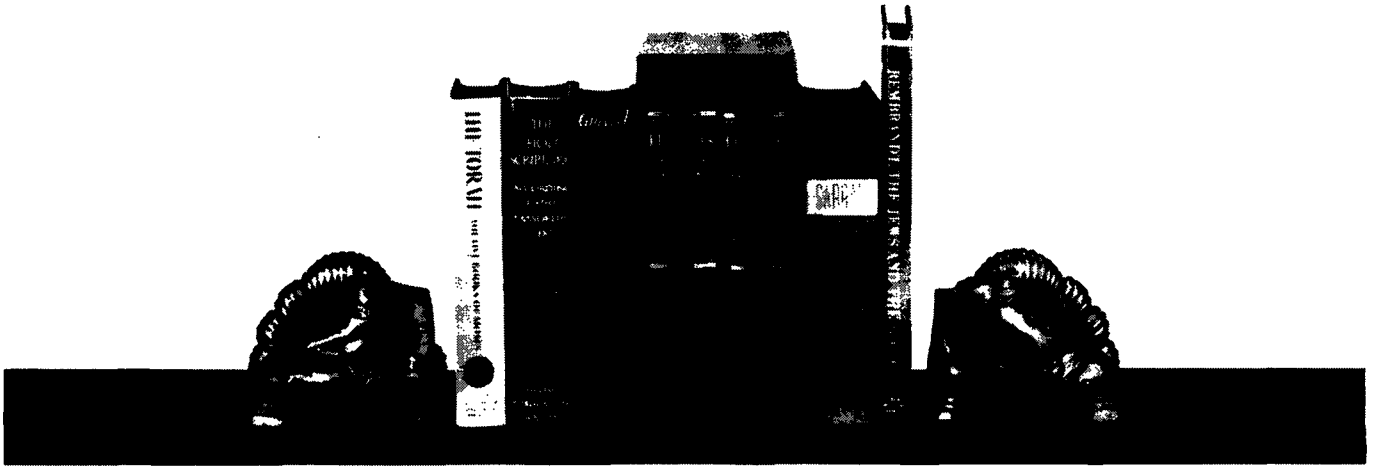

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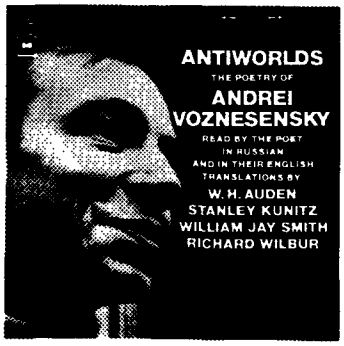

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all the critical references to Rosenberg. The password, the jello box, the money, and even the stopover at the Hilton Hotel are all missing (though the rooming house *is* recalled). This "story" was then cross-checked with a fearful and vulnerable witness who was trading "cooperation" for leniency. Apparently the corroboration by a man "who was no stranger to the untruth" (Greenglass) of a carefully coached account by another man, who was "quite capable of lying" (Gold) is Mr. Bickel's comforting formula for arriving at the probable truth!

. . . The authors of *Inquest* turned up several disquieting facts about Greenglass as well, which also failed to interest your reviewer. They discovered that the newly opened account (of $400) in the Albuquerque Bank was a *joint* account requiring two signatures. However, David could not have signed the card on June 4, since he was back in Los Alamos before the bank opened. The card would have to have been secured prior to that weekend (and Gold's visit) with the intention of getting David's signature when he was home. The inescapable conclusion is that the Greenglasses intended to open an account *before* they knew of the alleged payoff. . . . As the Schneirs point out, this is important, but not conclusive, one way or the other. However, in a carefully reasoned, and impressively objective chapter dealing with other "curious" factors surrounding the Greenglass finances, they build a conclusive case against accepting the $400 deposit as proof of a payoff for stolen secrets.

I have only touched on a small part of the very great doubts raised by this persuasive book. If anything, the authors are guilty of excessive restraint in arriving at their judgment. This book is "tedious and intemperate" only if one has no interest in the truth, justice or the law. Or again, if one feels it to be a threat to cherished illusions. . . .

BURT SILVERMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Many, many thanks, both to COMMENTARY and to Professor Bickel, for the passages in his review of *Invitation to an Inquest* in which he pinpoints that greatest obscenity of all, "the death sentence . . . the death sentence . . . the death sentence." No other re-

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IN THE OLD COUNTRY, a weary merchant stopped at a village hotel and asked for something to eat. When the hostess told him they had no meat or fish, the traveller said he'd settle for cheese and eggs. When told there were none, he said:

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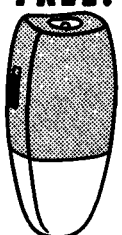

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viewer . . . put the pitiless spotlight on this damned spot that will not out. Lawyers who have to practice before the U.S. Court of Appeals fear to stir this up, or to recall that the elevation of the death-sentence judge to the Court of Appeals was a self-lobbied-for attempt to obliterate the stain and the shame; . . . Mr. Bickel . . . could not cover . . . everything. He might, however, have said a word on the living injustice: the continued incarceration of Morton Sobell, on whose behalf Judge Jerome Frank dissented from the original affirmance of conviction, and who might be free now (he has long since been eligible for parole), were it not for the tragic termination of the Kennedy administration.

HOWARD N. MEYER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Bickel assumed the "probable Rosenberg guilt," despite his recognition that the material witnesses against Rosenberg were all established liars. He assumed guilt because of the "meshing of testimony" which his question implies: "How did Gold and Greenglass independently come to tell lies that were not only consistent but that also meshed precisely at crucial points?"

Mr. Bickel's assumption was logical . . . [but] he obtained the wrong answer because he never imagined the extent of the prosecution's "wholly reprehensible conduct" which he and the Circuit Court had noted. The prosecution had withheld the crucial figure: naturally the result would be in error! They forgot to mention that the Gold-Greenglass "meshing" was not independent, that they had deliberately placed Gold in the same room with Greenglass, on the eleventh floor of the Tombs in New York, for a period extending many weeks before the beginning of the trial. There, together, they had access to all the technical books and charts which they needed, and all the time in the world to perfect a neatly-meshed tale.

It is indeed regrettable that the review, which clearly noted the inordinate nature of the sentences, completely ignored the case of Morton Sobell, now serving his 16th year in prison. Considering the dearth of evidence against Sobell, and the absence of corroboration of the single "espionage" witness against him, here is an injustice which can still, in part, be

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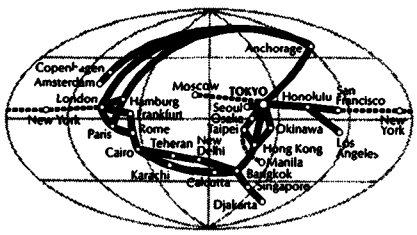

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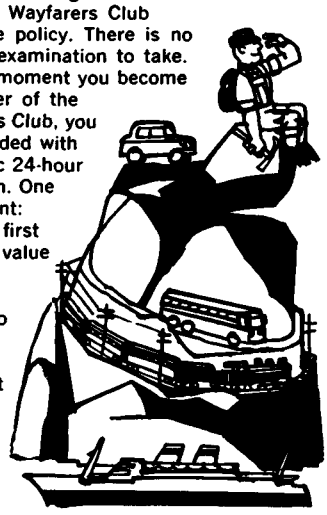

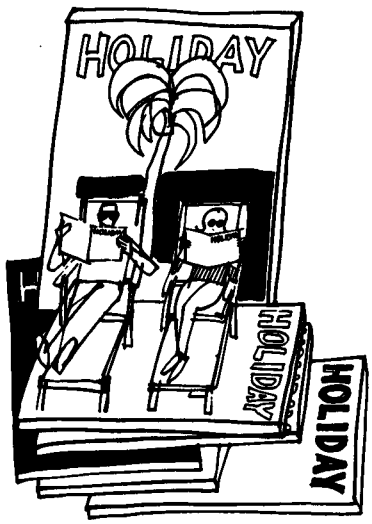

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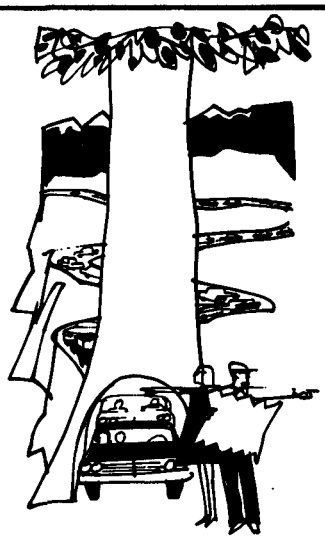

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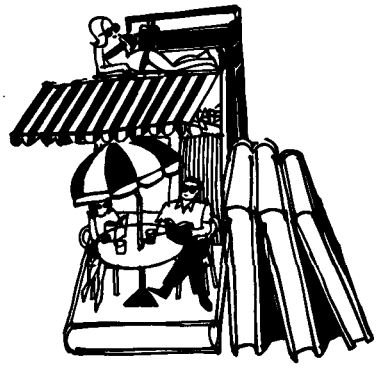

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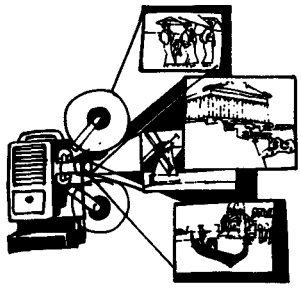

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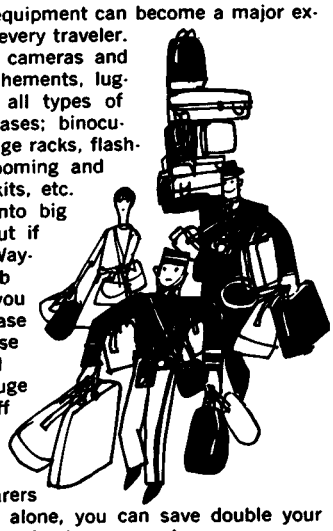

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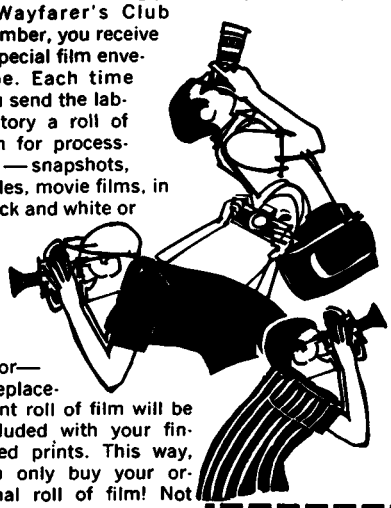

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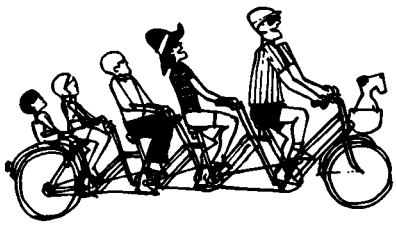

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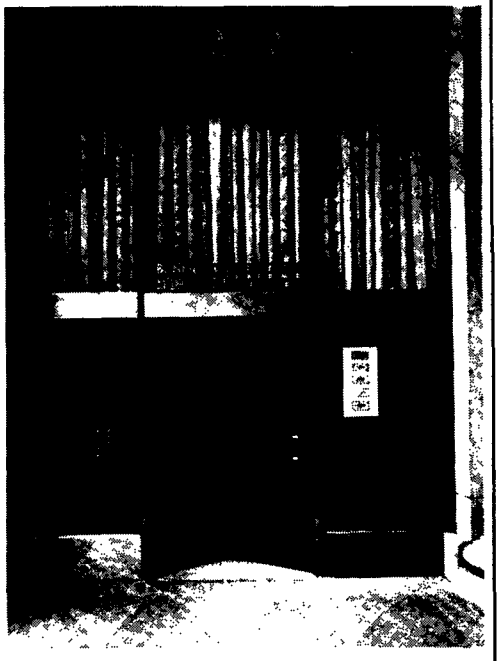

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remedied. President Johnson has the power to pardon or to grant clemency, and this is one case where that power should be exercised.

AARON KATZ
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am appalled by Mr. Bickel's colossal naiveté when he says, ". . . But they [the FBI] do not routinely suborn perjury and commit forgery." . . . The thrust of his argument is that if the FBI gives certain evidence in court, one has no reason to doubt its truth.

I wish our professors would familiarize themselves with the facts brought out in Senator Long's recent Congressional hearings on invasion of privacy. IRS agents testified to breaking, entering, and searching illegally and without a warrant, a private citizen's home; post-office officials illegally opened, delayed and kept a record of mail to private citizens, and lied on the witness stand; special lines illegally run into FBI headquarters to facilitate illegal wiretapping—this is all on record. These admissions of confident defiance of the law were revealed only when the witnesses were cornered by the questions and literally had no way out.

My concern is with the liberals' inability or unwillingness to be apprised of the obvious amorality and/or immorality of so many of our government agencies and the resultant paralysis of constructive action. . . . It's time our truth-seeking professors admitted that self-interest only . . . motivates our government as well as others, without the pretense of ideology or democratic ideals. . . .

REGINA LIEB
Chicago, Illinois

MR. BICKEL writes:

There seems to be a difference of opinion, and a lot of self-righteous assurance on the part of Messrs. Stout, Silverman, Katz, and Miss Lieb.

Mr. Stout: Collusive perjury may be a not altogether uncommon problem, but I am not prepared to jump, with Mr. Stout, to the quite unfounded conclusion that it took place in the Rosenberg case. And so we are left with supposed perjury which is not known to be collusive. A number of people telling the same lie independently—*that* is quite a coincidence. One thing that is common is truth-telling by

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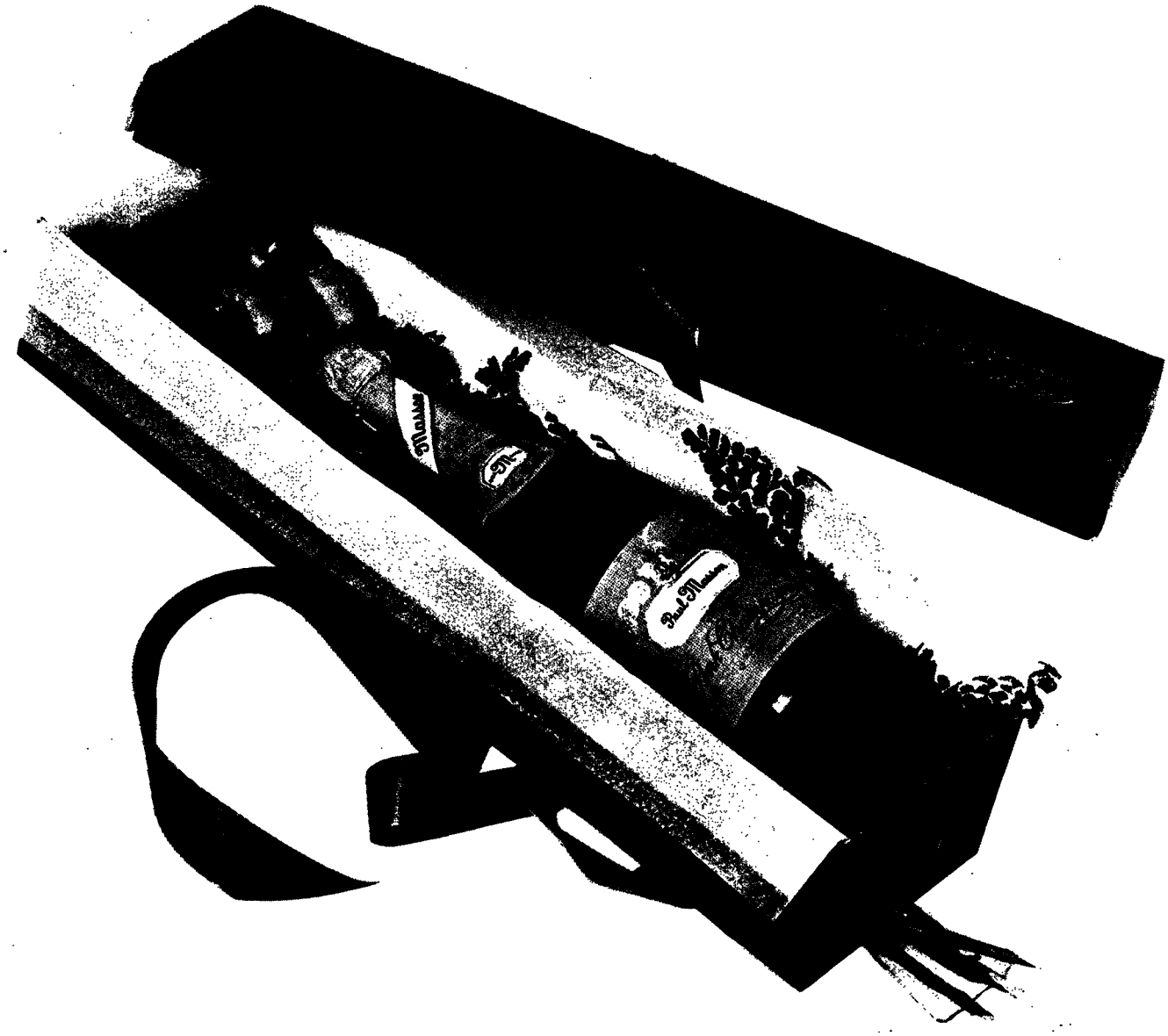

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liars. As few people, very likely, always lie as always tell the truth.

Mr. Silverman: Sure it was a political trial, if you will. But I believe that Dreyfus, Mooney, Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent of the crimes they were charged with, and I am not persuaded that the Rosenbergs were. Southern juries are what they are, and "*any*" society can perpetrate injustice. And what am I to make of that? I didn't give a complete account of the Schneirs' research because the editors didn't give over the entire issue to me. I tried to deal with the decisive points. Mr. Silverman deals with the other ones. The decisive thing about the forgery hypothesis is that it rests in the first place on a discrepancy in the registration card, which it then fails to explain, and which is more inconsistent with the forgery hypothesis than with any other.

Mr. Katz and Miss Lieb: The charge of collusion between Gold and Greenglass is based on opportunity and nothing else. It is thus sheer surmise. I am sorry Miss Lieb has come to see the world as she does. For me, the FBI also—even the FBI!—is presumptively innocent in the absence of proof to the contrary.

As for the case of Sobell—that is a separate story. I consider his sentence brutal, and have long favored commutation.

I wish to say a word about the tone of some of the letters. Mr. Stout writes, of course, from a long experience with the make-believe criminal world, and perhaps he may be excused for confidently ordering the real one about as he pleases also. But what kind of experience entitles a man, when the question is one of judgment, to assert that only his position is compatible with an "interest in the truth, justice or the law"?

ALEXANDER M. BICKEL
Yale University Law School
New Haven, Connecticut

For the Record

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to call your attention to a serious misstatement in James Q. Wilson's article, "The Flamboyant Mr. Powell" [January]. It reads: "When he first sought office, Powell was endorsed by many of the good-government forces that had backed the new City charter, including the League of Women Voters—and others." This erroneous information is taken from the book, *Adam Clayton Powell and the Politics of Race,* by Hickey and Edwin. However, it is not attributed to the book, although Mr. Wilson in a footnote attributes all quotations from Mr. Powell to this book. Both the publisher and the authors of the book have apologized for this error and have stated that it would not appear in future editions.

It is therefore regrettable that Mr. Wilson did not attribute his statement or check the facts.

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The Use of Hebrew

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his answer to my letter, Robert Alter makes the following parenthetical statement: "Both Maimonides and Ibn Gabirol, by the way, wrote their philosophical work in Arabic, but I would hardly expect a reader of Mr. Hurwitz's ilk to bother with historical facts" ["Letters from Readers," March].

The historical facts are, of course, that both authors wrote on philosophical issues also in Hebrew. I refer to Gabirol's *Keter Malkhut* and to Book I of *Mishneh Torah* by Maimonides, whose Hebrew style, incidentally, was considered for generations a model of discursive writing and retains its lucidity, precision, and beauty to this day. Both works, I believe, are available in English translation; at any rate, a description of their content can easily be found in any reference work. It should be added that *Keter Malkhut*'s poetic form does not detract from its philosophical content; *De Rerum Natura* is also a poem.

Mr. Alter then makes the very odd pronouncement: "there is no

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adequate Hebrew equivalent for the abstraction, 'pattern.'" This is simply wrong. The word, "pattern," has various meanings, depending on the context, and for *each*, as well as for the term itself, there are several synonyms in Hebrew, some recently coined or applied, others dating back to biblical times. The old Mishnaic term, *defus* . . . has now acquired the added sense of the abstraction "pattern" in certain contexts, where it means precisely that, and cannot be translated otherwise. . . .

URI HURWITZ

New York City

MR. ALTER writes:

In both cases, Mr. Hurwitz stretches the historical evidence considerably further than it will go in order to cover his position: (1) *Keter Malkhut* is a great visionary and confessional poem rich in neo-Platonic imagery, but it is hardly a vehicle for philosophical analysis, and it certainly played no role in the development of philosophical prose in Hebrew. Gabirol's major philosophical work, *The Source of Life*, was written in Arabic. (2) Maimonides does make an important attempt to use Hebrew for philosophical analysis in the first two sections of the *Mishneh Torah*, Book I, *Hilkhot Yesodei Hatorah* and *Hilkhot De'ot*. But these comprise only a small part of a work whose language and subject are legal, not philosophical, and it is in his legal style that Maimonides is a model of lucidity. His major philosophical work, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, was, of course, written in Arabic.

As for "pattern," I chose that example because last summer I spent a quarter of an hour with two young Israeli critics unsuccessfully trying to think how one might say "patterns of imagery" in Hebrew. *Defus* covers some senses of "pattern" but not this sense, and as Mr. Hurwitz seems to concede by his silence on the matter, Hebrew offers no means for moving from "images" to the abstraction, "imagery."

Overlooked Promise

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . How did it happen that in the home of creative editing an article on the transit strike went through without the editors' noticing its failure to mention something as important as Lindsay's promise to make the final agreement retroactive to January 1 if the men would continue to work during the negotiations—which, as labor leaders conceded, left the union with no justification for a strike ["Lindsay, Quill, and the Transit Strike," by Thomas R. Brooks, March]?

B. H. HAGGIN

New York City

MR. BROOKS writes:

The fault is mine, Mr. Haggin, and I suspect I overlooked Mayor Lindsay's offer of retroactivity for much the same reason the transit workers did: it was offered late in the game. Given the players, I suspect it would merely have postponed the inevitable. Moreover, on January 1, the union leaders and the members clearly believed that they would gain more through a strike than through protracted negotiations.

Limits of Objectivity

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I greatly appreciate Marvin Fox's kind words about the "sober" objectivity of my essay in *Rediscovering Judaism*, I regret that he did not make reference in his review [February] to the limits of such objectivity as I state them in the beginning of the essay. When I ask, "can one believe at once that a commandment or law is God-given and moral?" I ask a question capable of objective philosophical analysis. But when I ask, "what does the Lord of Israel demand of *me* or *us* today?" I must be as "subjective" in my groping answers as he accuses my colleagues in the volume of being. Such "subjectivity," it seems to me, is today inescapable—possibly even for an orthodox would-be observer of the whole *Halakhah*. But (and this Professor Fox recognizes), this subjectivity must be sharply distinguished from the whims of mere taste. After all, we all ask what is *demanded* of us; and in seeking to answer the question, we do not consult our isolated feelings, but confront tradition. Does not here lie a hope that our "subjective" gropings will lead to something more "objective"? And what other hope is there?

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM

University of Toronto

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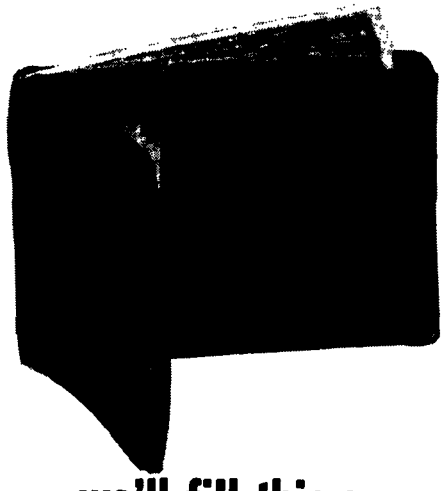

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MR. FOX writes:

Though Professor Fackenheim seems anxious to identify himself with his excessively subjective colleagues, nothing in his article justifies such a move. In praising his objectivity, I was referring to the method and contents of this one article, not to his personal stance, about which I do not claim to know anything. In his preface to the article, written after the essay, he says explicitly that "this essay means to fall into the discipline of modern Jewish philosophy" and therefore takes no direct stand on the "reality of revelation." The reason is that to affirm a revelation presupposes personal commitment. "Philosophical thinking, however, both presupposes, and stays with, objective detachment. . . ." I found in his article the very objectivity which Fackenheim promised, perhaps because I was prepared to take him seriously. I see no reason to revise my judgment that this objectivity is one of his great virtues.

What of the substantive issue? While I agree that there is an element of subjectivity in personal religious commitment, I deny that the *Halakhah* is subjective. A believing Jew knows, or can learn, what is demanded of him, insofar as the rule of law specifies. What is never given with objective certainty is the answer to the question, "What should I make of myself? Am I to become a physician or a merchant, a teacher or a laborer?" These questions always involve personal decisions for which only the individual concerned can be responsible. Even here I think that we are not necessarily restricted to the "whims of mere taste" but can seek to discover what is demanded of us. My impression is that there is basic agreement between Professor Fackenheim and myself on most of these issues, though we differ considerably when it comes to personal conformity to the *Halakhah*. . . .

Police & Public

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Thomas R. Brooks's article ["New York's Finest" August 1965] and the discussion among David B. Durk, Ronald Reis and Mr. Brooks in your February issue ["The Police"], I feel that Brooks, as a layman, based his criticism of the police department on purely personal feelings. . . . I am glad to see that COMMENTARY is willing to publish articles explaining police operations and procedures. . . .

AL MUIR
Department of Police Science
California State College
at Long Beach
Long Beach, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Brooks is obviously a damaging influence. . . . He has injured the efforts of all policemen, like myself, who are striving toward professionalism—a goal which cannot be achieved without cooperation from the public. You surely can't expect those readers who accept Mr. Brooks's article to develop a more positive attitude toward the police. . . .

The New York Police Department should be proud of Messrs. Durk and Reis. . . .

ROBERT F. SCHRAEDER
Department of Police Science
California State College
at Long Beach
Long Beach, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Durk and Mr. Reis regarding the distorted picture of police functions that Mr. Brooks presents. It is always possible to find one or two examples in support of an . . . idea, no matter how far from the truth it is. . . . In recent years, there has been a conscious and successful effort to raise the caliber of police personnel and functions. The public has a right to know and respect the police as they really exist.

JAMES SUTTON
Department of Police Science
California State College
at Long Beach
Long Beach, California

[*Further correspondence on the Durk-Reis-Brooks controversy will appear in our July issue.*]

Errata

In Jack Richardson's "The Best of Broadway" [March], it was incorrectly stated that Peter Weiss recently took up East German citizenship. Mr. Weiss is, in fact, a citizen of Sweden.

In Oscar Gass's "The U.S. Economy—1966" (April), the average number of persons who worked part-time though desiring full-time jobs in 1965 was incorrectly given as 1.9 million. The right figure is 2.2 million—ED.

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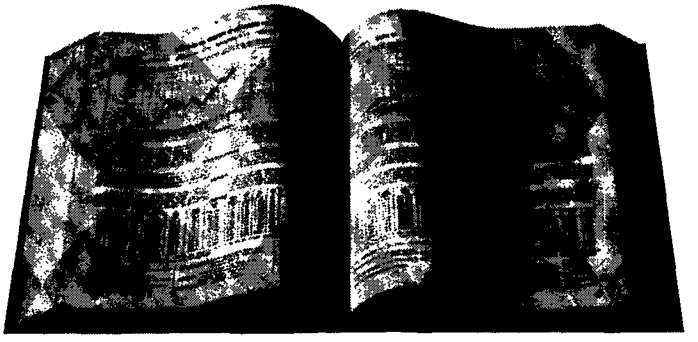

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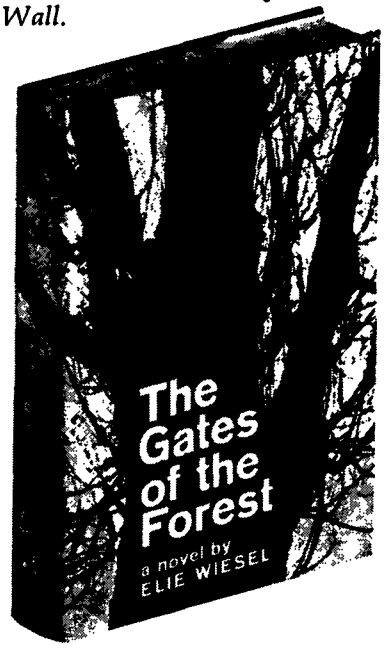

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JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

THESE, without doubt, are the years of the liberal. Almost everyone now so describes himself. Even the stoutest conservative confesses to flashes of liberal perception. The less stout praise even their imperceptible liberal tendencies. For the rest, a liberal stand on issues is synonymous with a sound and intelligent position. Liberalism, as it has been known in the United States, has no problem of quantity. Perhaps there is a slight continuing problem of quality.

But this is also a good time for reflection on liberal goals. In both domestic and foreign policy, we are by way of completing a chapter. Goals to which liberals have been committed for these last twenty years have ceased to be serviceable. We are making our way, with some uncertainty, into the next chapter. I find myself attracted by this position of strength and equally by the opportunity to supply the missing elements of direction.

I

IN DOMESTIC policy, the heart of the liberal program in these last twenty years, in natural reaction to the miseries of the 30's, has been to minimize unemployment and insure the greatest possible growth in economic output. The test of domestic failure or achievement has been the amount of unemployment and the annual increase in the Gross National Product. Liberals have shared this goal with conservatives; to a remarkable extent in these years, liberals and conservatives have pursued the same objectives in both foreign and domestic policy. The only difference in domestic policy is that liberals sought to do by calculated action—by public expenditure, deliberate deficits, tax reduction—what conservatives hoped to accomplish by balanced budgets, incantation, regular prayer and, perhaps, the sense of national dedication instilled by speeches by Richard Nixon.

High production and low unemployment have not become unimportant. It is only that we now have them. It cannot be the highest function of the modern liberal to work avidly to accomplish what has already been done.

And liberals are learning that these seemingly admirable goals can acquire some exceedingly conservative overtones. We achieve full employment and rapid economic growth by insuring a sufficient volume of demand in the economy—a volume of demand that keeps production up to the current capacity of labor force and plant. Under liberal tutelage, conservatives have learned that this can be accomplished by cutting taxes. And without the help of liberals, they have then learned that defense, war, and the ancient hostility to whatever helps the poor are excellent excuses for cutting socially desirable expenditures. Indeed, one of the singular achievements of liberals in these last years has been in showing conservatives, whom most of us had thought safely immune to any modern ideas, how they can have Keynes without liberalism and full employment without Shriver.

Economic growth as an all-embracing goal has a more serious shortcoming. Though it is a condition precedent for solving most social problems, there are many it doesn't solve. And it creates new ones. To be specific, economic growth does not provide the new and improved public services that are required by a higher level of private consumption or which mark our progress toward a more civilized existence. Nor does economic growth solve the problems of environment and especially of urban environment. On the contrary, it makes these problems infinitely more urgent. And, thirdly, economic growth does not help those who, for reasons of race, educational deprivation, early environment, location, health, age, family situation, mental retardation, are unable to participate fully in the economy and in its gains.

These three areas of need define the domestic program of liberals in the years ahead. I wish to say a word about each. But first let me note that on all of these tasks there has been a substantial beginning in the last few years. For this we can all be grateful to the practical liberalism of Lyndon Johnson. We owe much to his sound empiricism. Later in these remarks, I will have something to say about foreign policy. It will not be wholly unfavorable to the President. It will, however, be wholly candid on the over-age and weary ideas and the over-used and tired men on which our

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foreign policy, as it is known, depends. I hope that all liberals will keep these things in perspective. The humorless misachievements of the men who got us into the jungles of Vietnam must not be allowed to obscure the merits of far more liberal and astute achievements here at home. Our gains under the Johnson administration on civil rights well outweigh our losses on behalf of Marshal Ky.

II

THE FIRST liberal task is to work for necessary and urgent public services. These are still the very center of the liberal program. Increased private living standards must be matched by improved public services unless we are to have an obscene contrast between the two. Schools must be as well financed as television; hospitals should be as well financed as the sales pitch for cigarettes. Efforts to insure a minimal supply of breathable air must be in some relation to the output of automobiles.

And it is most important to remember that public services are highly progressive in their incidence. Almost all—public schools, public colleges and universities, public parks, good and well-paid police, good health services, good public transportation, even clean streets—render their greatest service to the poor. No one who calls for curtailment of public services should suppose the effect is neutral. No liberal should fail to point out that it is the poor who pay.

I might add that it pains me to see liberals resisting taxes, including sales taxes, which would allow of better public services. The income tax is certainly more progressive than the sales tax. But the sales tax, combined with the service it provides, is far more progressive than no tax and no service. One does no favor to a poor family by saving it a few dollars in taxes and denying its children the school and college training that would allow their advance into a wholly new income stratum.

The problem of environment, and especially that of urban environment, must be the next focus of liberal effort. Liberals have always found the problems of the federal government invested with a peculiar glamor. They have regularly left city government to the hacks with whom, on occasion, they have united to nominate a President. The problems of environment—of air and water pollution; of roadside commerce and billboards; of land development and urban sprawl—have seemed commonplace and sectarian. They involve new and disagreeable controls—we desperately need, for example, effective controls on urban and adjacent land use. Space is now our scarcest resource. An aesthetically tolerable development must be within a general framework of control. But these things involve rows; there are few vested interests so powerful as that in anarchic land use and development. Better save one's energy for the big picture. Questions of beauty and aesthetics can be left to the middle-class conservationist. The soul of the liberal belongs, after all, to the proletariat.

These attitudes can no longer be afforded. This is the age of the urban crisis. Liberalism will now be tested by what it can do in the cities as it was once tested by what it could do about economic performance and unemployment. The day is coming when no one will be considered really ready for higher office until he has been a successful mayor.

Liberals must also work to correct a grave and growing defect in our federal system—a defect which through the income and corporation taxes gives the revenues from increased income and output to the federal government and which gives the resulting tasks—the handling of people, traffic, offal—to the cities. It would be hard to imagine a worse design. The remedy is an arrangement that passes funds from the federal government to the localities. It is axiomatic that we cannot have any more federal tax reduction so long as the cities are as impoverished as now.

The third task for liberalism is to insure that the largest possible number of our people participate in the gains of our economy. This, in substantial measure, is what improved public services and improved environment serve to accomplish. It is what a sound educational system of uniform quality will accomplish. And a good health service. And decent housing. And good community surroundings. And good and fair law enforcement. And sound and well-enforced laws against discrimination. Far more than is realized, the present problem of poverty stems from the past neglect of the public sector of the economy and the special service this sector renders to the poor.

But more immediate efforts to mitigate poverty—the work of the Office of Economic Opportunity—deserve strong support. This work is encountering the fierce criticism of those who, as a matter of principle, rally in opposition to all efforts on behalf of the poor. Liberals must seek ways of strengthening this effort. And we should abandon without apology what does not work—for experiment was intended. But let us not be impressed by the statesman who reacts to instability in Indochina by appropriating a few more billions and to instability in a Job-Corps camp by asking for its abolition.

We must also now consider measures for guaranteeing minimum levels of income for the poor. Most of the men and women who now survive on inadequate income would work if they could. Idleness is less coveted as a career than most well-to-do people imagine. And it may not be all that more damaging to the poor than to the rich. Our present system of means tests is costly and an affront to human dignity. It has the worst of effects on incentives, for a small job means a large loss in welfare payments—the equivalent of a

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large tax on any income earned by working. Here is the next large item on the liberal agenda. It will be good, in a nostalgic way, to listen once more to those worried warnings from right-wing historians as to what it was that ruined Rome.

III

On foreign policy we have also had a twenty-year agreement on goals. Since the breakup of the wartime alliance, the goal to a singular degree has been to fight international Communism. Conservatives have strongly applauded this goal. Communists are casual about property rights. The right wing of the Republican party sets these well above human rights, and a moderate Republican is a man who believes them identical. Freedom, in one current of our political thought, means freedom to make money. Communists are clearly opposed to that. The identification of property and profits with personal liberty is sufficiently strong so that quite a few thoughtful right-wingers have been led to suggest that socialists be made honorary Communists.

But liberals long ago accepted simple anti-Communism as a goal of our foreign policy. Some had always doubted that individual liberty was compatible with democratic centralism. Some drew on their experience with the Communists in the unions. More were wounded by Stalin. During the war years they had accepted the current picture of Stalin as an amiable and avuncular figure. They had believed that our association with him would endure. Then came the great disillusionment which was hardly lessened when the Soviets themselves erased Stalin's name from their sacred tablets. The Right gleefully pounced on the error —and the erring. Once burned, American liberals were determined never to let it happen again. Henceforth, quite a few decided, they would be second to none in their war with Communism—only more intelligent.

There were differences on method. In the third world of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, aid and reform have bulked large in the liberal program. As one moved to the Right, one again encountered the old objection to helping the poor. But vastly more important was the effort to divorce Communism from its social context. Were it the result of exploitation or of oppression, it could be countered only by alternative reform. So increasingly it came to be pictured as a problem not in social deprivation but in moral degradation. This manifested itself in an all-powerful, all-embracing conspiracy. Wickedness and conspiracy could then be countered by military means. This, in the 50's, came to be the official view of Communism and the means for combating it. It is still highly influential and Mr. Dulles's disciples still make nostalgic pilgrimages to meetings of the treaty organizations he established. Liberals have been rightly skeptical of this divorce of Communism from social context, and also the associated policy of arming of the indigent. They have doubted that Communism would be effectively suppressed by either 19th-century diplomacy or 20th-century weapons.

But it was long common ground that our own military power must be great; that Communist ambition is unremitting; that it is always probing for weak points and will be dangerously encouraged by any success; and that any non-Communist leader, however repugnant, would, as a matter of expediency, have to be supported against the Communist conspiracy.

With some dissent from the extreme Right, it was also agreed during these years that foreign policy should be entrusted to the permanent diplomatic and military establishment under the general chairmanship of the New York foreign policy syndics. The latter—the Dulles-McCloy-Lovett communion with which, I am sure, Secretary Rusk would wish to be associated and of which Dean Acheson is a latter-day associate—has now provided the grace notes for American foreign policy for twenty years. It has credited itself with a uniquely perceptive view of, as it has always called it, the international Communist conspiracy. With the permanent establishment, it has now guided our foreign policy for so long that many Americans unquestionably imagine it to have permanent tenure. Liberals have turned up, on occasion, in the aid program and at the United Nations. Elsewhere, when in high office, they have considered it their principal function to bless with their liberal reputation whatever the State Department wished to do.

For a long while, the country went along. Foreign policy, until very recent times, had no strong clientele group in the United States. The actions of the Department of Agriculture or the National Labor Relations Board are closely scrutinized by people with a strong pecuniary interest in what goes on. Not so the State Department. This gave great power to the permanent establishment and the presiding archons. Truth tended to be what they proclaimed. If there seemed to be dissent, it was sufficient to warn of the risks of another Munich or to call for national unity. Silence then ensued.

IV

Now this chapter has also come to an end. The old coalescence on the old and simple goal of anti-Communism is past. And, I venture to think, that the old leaders are not far short of honorable retirement. Their policies can no longer be afforded.

The first factor making for change has been the arrival of a new generation. It has, I would judge, an adequately sophisticated view of Communism. But it is unscarred by the memories of Joseph Stalin and Joe McCarthy, and perhaps less im-

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pressed than an earlier generation by the magic name of Jack McCloy. It is not subject to the scarring fears which caused an older generation to be equally fearful of Communism and of seeming to be soft on Communism. Reflecting the great expansion of the educated and educational community, it is also a client group on foreign policy of no small size. And it does not accept the official truth on foreign policy with the acquiescence that so many would like to associate with sound Americanism. It has been taught to be skeptical. It will be, henceforth, a powerful force influencing foreign policy.

The growing pluralism of the Communist world has also done great damage to the old coalescence. It requires a policy as between Communist powers. No longer can it proclaim a holy war against all. It is not surprising that more determined or nostalgic members of the old guard still speak rather doggedly of a Sino-Soviet bloc.

The old policy and policy-makers have been greatly weakened by the number of initiatives they have launched against the Communists in these last years which—when the realities were faced—have had to be reversed.

They launched the great drive to expel the Soviets from the UN under Article 19 of the Charter. And they had to reverse course because the reality was that we wanted the Soviets to remain.

They took action on behalf of Generals Wessin y Wessin and Imbert in the Dominican Republic. And they were reversed because the reality was that right-wing dictatorships promised to be more damaging than the risk, such as it was, of Communism.

They launched the MLF, committed the country deathlessly to this concept, and then reversed course because the reality was that our allies feared the proposal more than they feared the Soviets.

The archons of the old coalition are now busy disciplining de Gaulle and saving NATO. We can only hope that the alliance will survive its salvation.

The reality is that the country has long accepted and adapted a policy of getting along, in one way or another, with the Soviets. Having lived on the same planet with the Russians without coming to blows for fifty years, the country also has a disposition to keep on trying. This means that it is interested not in how to promote conflict but in how to reconcile diverse interests without conflict. But the liturgy of our foreign policy held, and still holds, this to be heresy. Peaceful coexistence is a snare and delusion. Conflict is the reality. One must not traffic, much less compromise, with evil. On occasion, usually under White House pressure, the State Department responds to suggestions for keeping peace with cautious approval. But not for years has it been imagined that a Secretary of State could be the source of any such suggestion.

Let me look at some affirmative steps for escaping from this outworn legacy. Inevitably I must conclude with some references to the crowning accomplishment of the old policy. That is our defense of that bastion of freedom, as an anarchist would define it, in Vietnam.

V

THE TEST of policy henceforth must be not the negative one of what fights Communism but the affirmative one of what serves the interests of the United States—and the larger human concerns. As occasion and good judgment require, this will mean that we will oppose what the Communist nations seek. And as circumstances and good judgment require, it means that we pursue policies that reflect a common interest in improved well-being and survival.

Liberals must affirm, what we long ago learned, that the only good foreign policy is a liberal foreign policy, and that liberalism does not stop at the water's edge. This is no matter of empty oratory; it is a highly practical business. A liberal policy identifies us with the hopes and aspirations of the people. This is a durable association. A conservative policy identifies us with privileged groups and with governments that are the servants and protectors of privilege. And we pay the penalty for such association when, as it must, the day of the people arrives.

The notion that foreigners in their simple, good-natured way will make do with dictators and despots, competent or more often incompetent, and with the resulting indignity, has been and remains the major error of the older archons of our foreign policy and of the permanent establishment. Because they are not offensive to well-mannered Americans who are not subject to their rule, it is still believed that these light opera tyrants should be equally acceptable to their own people.

I soberly and unhappily predict that the present military regime in Brazil, now the subject of such unstinted praise, will in retrospect look like the rest. Let someone keep score on those who disagree. That latter-day democrat and humanitarian, Marshal Ky, seems already to be a source of doubt to almost everyone but the Secretary of State. Historians of our age will be astonished, incidentally, at how little these men seem to be helped by having their pictures on the cover of *Time*.

Liberals are also committed, in international affairs, to the rule of law. This is a principle and not a tactic. We support the United Nations as an instrument of law and not as a forum for cold-war polemics or as a last resort in error.

Liberals cannot believe that difficult or controversial questions can best be resolved by putting them in deep freeze or pretending they do not exist. Such has been our policy on China. Nor, at this stage, can liberals be impressed by infinitesimal gestures that could have been made ten years

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ago. We should make it wholly clear that when China is willing to recognize the separate existence of Formosa and accept the charter of the United Nations, we, in turn, will support her admission to the United Nations and will accord her recognition.

I see no reason, finally, why liberals should regret their past commitment to the aid program and to the principle of helping the poor to help themselves. That policy has served us well. We are, despite all misfortune, well regarded in the poor lands. The reason is not the power of our arms, the subtlety of our propaganda, or the acuity of our intelligence organizations. It is not even the eloquence of our past ambassadors. The reason is the aid program.

All of the foregoing means that we cannot have a good foreign policy that is run by conservatives—however venerable their service or however estimable their motives. This is a contradiction in terms. It is also denied by all recent experience.

Let us also note moreover that liberalism, in the United States, is not exactly a minority position. It is an odd concept of democracy that leads us to work hard to elect liberal governments in order to put our foreign policy under those who couldn't care less. Let us note well that the reputation of what would have been counted the most successful liberal administration since Roosevelt is well on the way to being ruined by the foreign policy of men who have never raised their hands on behalf of any liberal cause in their life.

Liberals long ago learned that liberal domestic policies are safe only in the hands of liberals. The same rule must now be applied to the field of foreign affairs. And it is my impression that, among those who will most welcome the change, will be the younger members of our foreign-policy establishment. They, too, are unaffected by the fear and rigidity of the older generation; the oversimplifications and failures of the old policy have not escaped their attention. They would respond gladly to liberal leadership and, indeed, they deserve it.

VI

Let me now say a word about the most annoying, though not I venture the most important, of our problems—that of Vietnam. Vietnam will be the graveyard of the old policy. It is worth hoping that the policy is all that gets buried.

Let me also be clear that my primary intention is not to offer criticism of the President of the United States. The President is rightly held responsible for his administration. But he cannot be held responsible for his inheritance. President Johnson inherited a good part of the Vietnam involvement. And he inherited, in the old policy, the attitudes which have led to our present misfortunes. I am among those who believe the President has been a force for restraint—and for change in the old policy. I do confess to believing that he could do with more and better help.

Our Vietnam involvement was a textbook manifestation of the old policy. The elements were all there:

> . . . The reaction was automatic. We did not need to consider whether we defended viable institutions or fought on favorable terrain. No one, I believe, suggests that the Vietnamese are a Teutonic and warrior race that for reasons of survival we must have on our side.
>
> . . . It was assumed that we faced a unified conspiracy directed, according to changing preference, by Hanoi, Peking, or international Communism in general.
>
> . . . There being no serious social foundation for the insurgency, those who do the fighting are the servants of the external authority. They have no personal stake in the insurrection and can be ignored as a factor in any settlement.
>
> . . . No social issue was involved; military measures, it was long felt, would suffice for solution.
>
> . . . Until the moment of their collapse, governments on our side have been bastions of liberty and their leaders have been honorary pillars of freedom and democracy which their people would well support.
>
> . . . Americans could be counted on to believe what they were told, particularly about the power and integrity of the people on our side and the menace with which we deal. If they seemed to waver, one could always mention Munich.

Not one of these propositions has survived the experience. And I think it well that we should reflect on this experience, for those who do not learn their history are doomed to repeat it. And I would judge that few Americans yearn to repeat this experience. But liberalism is a practical faith. We must always start from where we are. How do we escape from this entrapment?

We must, first of all, escape from the entrapment of our own propaganda. Vietnam is not important to us. Nor is it a bastion of freedom. Nor is it a testing place for democracy. It is none of these things. Had it been lost in 1954, no one would now be thinking of it. Far too many of our officials have been so persuaded because, much in the manner of a man shouting down a well, they have heard their own voices. Let us resolve to stop talking this nonsense.

We must abandon the notion—as I am sure most sensible people have in Washington—that we are going to roll the Vietcong back from vast areas that they have controlled now for up to ten years. We must not invest lives, even those of other people, in an enterprise of such dubious and temporary value to the Vietnamese who might survive.

Our immediate policy must be to remain on the defensive in whatever area we can hold with the present force. This may well be rather small. But

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it will provide a refuge for those who have joined our enterprise. This will also sufficiently establish the one valid way in which resistance serves our policy, which is to show that whatever our error in getting in, we cannot easily be shoved out. Conceivably, this might then present some future probe. However, we may remind ourselves that the world did not lose respect for the Russians because they retreated in Cuba.

There can be no real doubt as to the military feasibility of this policy. Military men always describe as unfeasible what they do not wish to do. If we can clear and hold all of South Vietnam with a large force, we can hold a very limited area with a smaller force.

We should, and this is a vital step beyond present policy, now permanently suspend air attacks on the North. This is not for humane reasons, although I am not opposed to humanity. Nor is it because air power is both indiscriminate and ineffective, although this is also true. (We are congenitally over-impressed by air power. To realize this, we need only compare the promises of the last year with the performance.) We should stop because these attacks, and the temptation to extend them, involve the one major and intolerable risk, which is war with China or conceivably Russia. The temptation to extend these attacks is especially strong when things go wrong politically in the South.

It will be no comfort, if we find ourselves involved with the Chinese on the Asian mainland, that it resulted from a miscalculation. We must all remember that the phrase "calculated risk" is a military euphemism for total ignorance as to the outcome of a particular action.

Next we must face seriously the likelihood that there will not again be a government in Saigon which is seriously capable of prosecuting the war along with us. A government that reflects the interest of the people will reflect their suspicion of foreigners, their struggle for a national identity, and their terrible war-weariness. It will not fight. A government that works with us and fights the war will not have the support of the people. It will not last. This is not a defeatist assessment. All it does is accept the developing evidence of these last months and years.

Under these circumstances, the purpose of the holding action is to assist the striking of the best possible bargain between the non-Communist groups in Vietnam and the Vietcong. There is now no longer doubt as to whether negotiations are desirable or not; there is more doubt as to whether they will be conducted by us. The ultimate bargain will not be brilliant.

In that part of the world, the writ of a central government often runs only to the airport. What counts is local control of the countryside. What we should welcome, should we be so fortunate as to get it, is a regional settlement, as in Laos. The central government will, at best, be only a loose federalism of areas under different control. But that is about all Indochinese governments ever have been.

Let me stress again the present importance of restraint. Some will certainly suggest covering their disappointments in the South with more muscular action elsewhere. The purpose of this, like the demand for manpower to pacify the whole country, is now, however subjectively, to bale out the reputations of those who for so long have been committed to this ill-starred enterprise. Let us resolve to save their reputations and reward them most handsomely, but in some other way.

We have paid heavily for the myth of the old policy in Vietnam. But fortunately the cost in money has so far been larger than that in lives. And fortunately, also, the lessons—the dangers of unlimited commitment, the dangers in supporting governments that are unsupported by their people, the limits of military solutions, the healthy skepticism of our own people where official truth is involved—are all brilliantly clear. Perhaps these inhospitable jungles were well designed to stimulate a more liberal, more rational, more discriminating, more collectively motivated and somewhat less paranoiac view of our mission in the world.

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NORMAN COHN

THE MYTH OF THE JEWISH WORLD-CONSPIRACY *

A Case Study in Collective Psychopathology

IT IS OFTEN said that wherever Jews have settled since the dispersion, anti-Semitism has appeared in the local population. This is untrue. For some two thousand years Jewish settlements existed in India and China without attracting any particular attention; to this day, the Jewish artisans and peasants of India are regarded simply as one of the innumerable religious communities of the sub-continent, with nothing in the least odd about them. Even in Europe, Jews lived in peace for many centuries before it occurred to anyone to molest them. Along the Rhine, Jewish communities lived in amity with their neighbors before they were attacked and almost exterminated by the migrant hordes in the people's crusades. Clearly, the exclusiveness prescribed by Jewish religion—which is in any case no greater than that prescribed by various other religions—is not enough by itself to provoke serious hostility in non-Jews.

Even in those parts of the world where anti-Semitism is endemic, it can have very different meanings. There is a kind of anti-Semitism which is fairly closely related to the role played by Jews, or at least by some Jews, in the society in question. For instance, it has happened again and again that Jews, because of their peculiar history, have been pioneers in trade and money-lending in predominantly agricultural societies, while at the same time living more or less segregated from the population around them. In such cases they have attracted the same kind of hostility as, say, Indian traders in Southeastern Africa or Chinese traders in Java. Again, the centuries in the ghetto inevitably fostered attitudes of inferiority and of compensatory superiority in many Jews, which did not automatically disappear the moment the ghetto walls fell; and this too helped to feed anti-Semitism. But in all this there is nothing that is not paralleled in many other forms of social antagonism the world over. And certainly, though these factors might have led to occasional outbreaks of violence, they would never by themselves have led to attempts at genocide. The anti-Semitism that leads to such results is of a different and very special kind.

Exterminatory anti-Semitism appears where Jews are imagined as a collective embodiment of evil, a conspiratorial body dedicated to the task of ruining and then dominating the rest of mankind. This kind of anti-Semitism can exist almost regardless of the real situation of Jews in society. It can prosper where Jews form a large, cohesive, and clearly recognizable minority, but also where the only Jews are a few scattered individuals who hardly regard themselves as Jews at all. And if it thrives on the spectacle of rich and influential Jews, it does not necessarily wilt where all Jews are poor. Most striking of all, it can be found among people who have never set eyes on a Jew, and in countries where there have been no Jews for centuries.

This kind of anti-Semitism is a matter of fantasy, and what it fantasies is the opposite of reality. In reality, Jews are just as diverse as one would expect from their extraordinarily varied history. Even before the creation of the State of Israel introduced new complexities, there was little enough to link, say, an assimilated, free-thinking Frenchman of Jewish descent with a rigorously Orthodox rabbi in eastern Europe, or an artisan in Salonika with a doctor in Berlin, or any of these with the second or third generation of Jewish immigrants in the United States. No doubt, a certain awareness of common origins and a common cultural heritage, an awareness also of repeated persecutions and migrations, colors the outlook of most Jews; but this is vastly different from the unity and uniformity which anti-Semites imagine. Again, since the dispersion there has been no central Jewish authority of any kind. Though individual rabbis have at times attained great moral prestige, there has been nothing in the least like a government—not even an ecclesiastical government—with authority over all Jews; even the chief rabbinate in the various countries is a modern invention which originated simply as an administrative convenience. Above all, the Jews of the world have never possessed, as a collectivity, any considerable power. In some countries, and at some times, individual Jews might

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achieve positions of influence, and individual Jewish communities might be able to defend their interests when these were threatened; it could even happen that prosperous and fortunate communities were able to assist persecuted Jews in other lands. The fact remains that Jews have not been able either to protect themselves or their fellows from wholesale massacre or to induce any great power to do so.

Such is the reality. The essence of the exterminatory kind of anti-Semitism is that it rejects and contradicts this reality and insists that Jews are united under a central government in the pursuit of total power over the whole world.

THE MYTH of the Jewish world-conspiracy, then, has very little to do with real people and real situations and real conflicts in the modern world; and this seems natural enough when one considers how it originated. The fantasy of Jews as a brotherhood of evil was first conceived between the 2nd and 4th centuries, as a device for immunizing Christians against the attractions of the parent religion; and seven or eight centuries later, in western Europe, it developed into a coherent and terrifying demonology. From the 12th century onward, Jews were seen as a conspiracy of sorcerers working on orders from Satan for the spiritual and physical ruination of Christendom. This was the period when Jews began to be massacred on charges of killing Christian children, of torturing the consecrated wafer, of poisoning wells. And in the same period the mystery-plays taught people that Antichrist would be a Jew and would have the Jews as his most devoted followers.

Myths do not necessarily disappear with the circumstances that first produced them. They sometimes acquire an autonomy, a vitality of their own, that carries them across the continents and down the centuries. This was very much the case with the demonological view of Jewry and Judaism. In many parts of eastern and central Europe it was still widely believed right into the 20th century that the blood of Christian children was used for making the unleavened Passover bread. Within the last twenty or thirty years it has happened to Jewish tourists in the remoter parts of Spain to be told that they could not possibly be Jews, as they had no horns.

Out of these ancient superstitions there grew the modern myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy. The core of this myth is the belief that there exists a secret Jewish government which, using all Jews as its instruments, is aiming at world-domination. This idea first appeared in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution. In 1797, the Abbé Barruel published a voluminous work to show that the revolution had been produced by a conspiracy of Freemasons, but later he propagated the idea that the Freemasons were mere tools in the hands of an invisible Jewish organization. Moreover, this organization was supposed to be immensely ancient—the Freemasons and the French Revolution were simply the latest fruits of a Jewish conspiracy which was as old as Christianity itself. In the course of the 19th century, this myth played a certain part in the struggle between the Roman Catholic church and the forces of secularism, liberalism, and, latterly, socialism. Although no pope ever lent his authority to the idea, a number of Roman Catholic publicists in France, Italy, and Germany—including some clerics and at least one archbishop—tried to discredit these movements by presenting them as an elaborate confidence trick played by a secret Jewish government upon the unsuspecting peoples of Europe.

By the end of the century, the myth of the Jewish conspiracy had been elaborated to the point where it could function as a complete, though crazy, interpretation of the modern world. All the most characteristic features of the new civilization were presented as maneuvers in a vast Jewish campaign to secure dominion over the whole world. Capitalism was seen as a Jewish creation, and so were the various labor movements, revolutionary and reformist, which aimed at transforming or abolishing capitalism. The trade cycle, with its alternation of booms and slumps, was supposed to be devised in the secret councils of the Jews. And since the Jewish super-government was also thought to control all governments, all political parties, and all newspapers in Europe, it was held responsible for all international tensions and wars. In these ways it was supposed to be reducing the whole of Europe, and indeed the whole world, to such misery and chaos that before long—certainly within the next hundred years—it would be able to emerge openly as the world-ruler. Such would be the culmination of a plan pursued relentlessly and with absolute consistency by successive generations of Jews for two thousand years.

THE PRINCIPAL vehicle for the myth was the famous forgery known as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The *Protocols* consist of a series of lectures which are supposed to have been given by a member of the secret government to a select Jewish audience; and they expound the various ways in which world-domination is being attained. They were fabricated almost certainly by the secret police of Tsarist Russia, the notorious *Okhrana*, around 1895, but they had little influence even inside Russia, and were quite unknown outside it, until the Bolshevik revolution and the civil war of 1919-1920. Then they were distributed to the troops in the "White" armies to persuade them that the revolution had nothing to do with the condition of Russian society but was simply a maneuver in the Jewish struggle for world-domination; so that the war was not really a civil war, but a war to liberate Russia from the

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clutches of the secret Jewish government. This propaganda certainly contributed to the great Jew-killings perpetrated by the "White" armies. Moreover, soon the *Protocols* were being carried by right-wing Russians to the capitals of all the major powers—at first to put new life into the war of intervention, later in the hope of provoking an international crusade against the Soviet Union.

Anyone who has studied the *Protocols* can only marvel at the success they enjoyed in the 1920's and 1930's. They argue, for instance, that the purpose of underground railways is to enable the secret Jewish rulers, when the time is ripe, to blow up the capital of any country which resists their rule; and that if the sons of the nobility study Latin and Greek, it is because the Jews have chosen this as a good way of undermining their morals. Yet despite such absurdities, the *Protocols* sold in millions all over the world—indeed they were translated into so many languages that they were probably more widely distributed than any book except the Bible. In the United States, Henry Ford propagated them through his newspaper the *Dearborn Independent* in the 1920's, and in the 1930's the "radio priest" Father Coughlin passed the message on to his audience of millions. France saw many editions of the *Protocols*—one, a massive deluxe edition, was dignified by the name of an eminent prelate, while another was for many years the best-selling publication of a leading Paris publisher. The first English edition, in 1920, prompted the London *Times* itself to inquire, in a portentous article, whether the world had escaped from the *Pax Germanica* only to fall into the *Pax Judaeica*; while *The Spectator* talked of a royal commission to establish whether British Jews were in fact subjects of a secret government.

If such were the reactions in the liberal democracies, one can imagine how the *Protocols* were greeted in countries like Poland and Rumania. But it was in Germany that they celebrated their greatest triumph. Here they were used to explain all the disasters that had befallen the country: the defeat in the World War, the inflation which ruined the mass of the population, the hunger and misery—all these things were the work of the invisible Elders of Zion. At first, the deposed Hohenzollerns patronized and helped to finance this campaign but before long it was taken over by other and more sinister elements. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were at the very center of Hitler's thinking and of the Nazi ideology.

It is characteristic of anti-Semitic forgeries and fabrications of the type of the *Protocols* that they combine the medieval with the modern. While the basic assumptions and attitudes are those of an ancient demonology, the supposed conspiracy is a thoroughly modern affair. For one thing, it operates on a bigger scale; whereas ritual murder was imagined as happening from time to time, now here, now there, the Elders of Zion are imagined as an international government whose machinations constantly affect the whole world. And again, the means by which the Elders pursue the goal belong entirely to the 19th and 20th centuries. Instead of muttering spells, these sorcerers place articles in the press; instead of poisoning wells, they plunge whole countries into slumps and wars and revolutions.

In all this, the *Protocols* faithfully reflect the complex structure of latter-day anti-Semitism at its most virulent. For in the eyes of fanatical anti-Semites the Jew, while retaining all the mysterious, uncanny, supernatural attitudes that were wished upon him in the Middle Ages, is also the symbol of modernity, or rather of everything that is felt as frightening in the modern world. The modern age brought the emancipation of the Jews, first in France at the time of the French Revolution, and then in one country after another during the 19th century. Everywhere, Jews quickly became prominent in those fields for which they had been fitted by their previous history; banking, certain branches of commerce, journalism. And at the same time Jews became prominent in liberal, radical, and revolutionary movements—as was only to be expected in view of their own experience of oppression and their often very incomplete emancipation. There was nothing mysterious in any of this—but it did mean that those who for whatever reason suffered helplessly from the modern world, and could not adjust themselves so as to benefit from it, could easily see in the Jew the embodiment of the civilization they detested.

Even here, of course, the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy remained grotesquely remote from reality. It is true that Jews benefited from the French Revolution, but totally untrue that they caused it. It is true that some Jews became prominent bankers, but utterly false that banking was invented by Jews as a means to securing world-dominion. And while many Jews became important figures in journalism and in politics, the views they expressed and the interests they supported ranged over almost the entire political spectrum.

There is, in fact, a great irony in the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy—which is, that it reached its most coherent and deadly formulation at the very time when Jews were in reality more divided than ever before: between Orthodox and Reform, practicing and indifferent, believing and agnostic, assimilationist and Zionist, not to mention the many who utterly rejected their Jewish origin. But all this had not the slightest effect on the myth or on those who propagated it; for they were in any case convinced that though the powers of darkness might put on many forms and wear many disguises, in their ultimate purposes they were at one.

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In one form or another the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy has survived for many centuries and has spread across the world from continent to continent. And it has always shown the same astonishing capacity to turn certain individuals into blind fanatics, beyond the reach of rational argument and impervious to evidence. This suggests that it answers to deep and enduring unconscious needs. Just what those needs are becomes apparent when one applies the insights of psychoanalysis to the structure of the myth itself.

Reflecting on these matters some ten years ago, I advanced the hypothesis that at the deepest level, fanatical anti-Semitism is a matter of unconscious negative projections, i.e. of the mental mechanism by which human beings read into the behavior of others the anarchic tendencies which they fear to recognize in themselves. More specifically, I argued that fanatical anti-Semites are quite unaware of Jews as individuals and simply project onto Jews as a collectivity the images associated with an unresolved Oedipus complex. In other words, I suggested, "the Jew" is unconsciously seen both as the "bad" son, i.e. the rebellious son full of murderous wishes toward the father, and the "bad" father, i.e. the potential torturer, castrator, and killer of the son. Nobody could have been more surprised than I at the reception accorded to this hypothesis; for while some reviewers dismissed it as foolish speculation, others hailed it as an extraordinary revelation. In reality it was neither of these things, but a sober application to a specific problem of some of the oldest and best established of psychoanalytical findings. And I was more interested than surprised when I later discovered that several professional psychoanalysts had preceded me with precisely the same hypothesis.

Half of the hypothesis is, in fact, familiar enough. Sigmund Freud saw very clearly that the Jews, because they rejected the authority of the Christian God, were ideal symbols of the unavowed resentment which the exacting demands of Christianity have always evoked in many Christians. Following this line of thought, other psychoanalysts have argued that because they refuse to recognize Christ as God, Jews appear to Christians as unrepentant parricides and therefore easily become scapegoats both for the Christian's unavowed hatred of his God and for his unconscious hatred of his father.

The other half of the hypothesis is less familiar but more important. Unconsciously, "the Jew" is even more closely identified with the "bad" father than he is with the "bad" son. This is understandable enough, for the historical relationship of the Jewish people to Christianity and to Europe makes it almost inevitable that it should be seen as a kind of collective father-figure. As an identifiable people, the Jews are of course very much older than most of the European peoples, but that is not all: the Jewish religion is the parent religion out of which, and in rivalry with which, Christianity developed. Most important of all, perhaps, is the fact that while the God of Christianity combines the attributes of father and son, the God of the Jews is father only—and, one may add, in the eyes of Christians who learn of him only from the Old Testament and know nothing of the later development of Judaism, a singularly tyrannical and merciless father at that.

The Jews in Christendom, then, were ideally situated to receive the Oedipal projections associated with the "bad" father. Now this was a terrible fate, for the fantasied "bad" father is infinitely more hateful than any real father could ever be. This is inevitable, in view of the psychic processes by which this figure is produced. When a small boy both loves and hates his father with such intensity that the conflict becomes intolerable, he may split the father-image into a "good" father and a "bad" father. This enables him, by idealizing his real father or some father-surrogate, to acquire a father whom he can love unreservedly. Unfortunately, the same process also produces a father-image which is utterly hateful—and this too can be projected onto any suitable father-surrogate that offers. To realize just what this implies one has to remember what infantile hatred is like—that where a small child hates, it wishes to kill, smash, utterly destroy the hated object. At the same time, it feels intensely guilty. This feeling of guilt is quickly repressed into the unconscious, but it finds an outlet nevertheless. The hated object itself turns into a monster demanding retribution, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The figure of the "bad" father becomes a persecutor, endowed with all the merciless hatred and destructive fury which the child feels, but dares not fully recognize, in himself.

So it comes about that the small boy constructs out of his own destructive impulses and his own sense of guilt a father-figure of quite monstrous cruelty and murderousness—a castrating, torturing, cannibalistic, all-powerful being beside whom even the harshest of real parents would appear harmless. The trouble is that the many men who never cease to be small boys in their emotional lives continue to see these monsters around them, incarnated in other human beings. It was the tragedy of the Jews that from the later Middle Ages onward, they tended to be seen in just such a way. In popular art they commonly appeared as extremely old men who are also devils—creatures with enormous growths of hair and beard, but also with horns and tails and with expressions of horrible cruelty.

Viewed in these terms, the worst of the traditional anti-Semitic accusations take on a new and still more disturbing meaning. One has only to look at any medieval picture illustrating a ritual murder story to recognize the unconscious content of the fantasy. A small boy—it is, significantly, always a boy, never a girl—is surrounded by a

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group of elderly men with long beards, who are torturing and castrating him and drawing off and collecting his blood. The same unconscious content is clearly recognizable in the other constantly-recurring accusation, which was of torturing the consecrated wafer. This, of course, was effective only where and when Christ was believed to be physically present in the host, that is to say in Roman Catholic countries; but there it was very effective indeed—in Poland it provoked massacres as late as the 18th century. Here, too, the illustrations show bearded Jews attacking the wafer with nails and pincers—and as though to uncover the true meaning of these stories, we are sometimes told not only that the host gushed blood but that, at the height of the torture, Christ appeared in the wafer as a small child, bleeding and weeping.

All this helps to throw a new light on the oldest and deadliest charge of all, the charge of deicide, which was still a subject of such passionate debate at the Vatican Council in 1965. In Freud's eyes the idea of deicide had only one unconscious meaning, and that was parricide; but had he known as much of Christianity as he knew of Judaism, he would undoubtedly have realized that that is not its only possible meaning. For Christians, the crucified Christ has the significance much more of a son than of a father. If, therefore, as is constantly asserted in Christian teaching, the Jews are collectively guilty of the death of Christ, they are not so much parricides as slayers of a son, the suppressers of a new generation, those who destroy fresh life and thwart its promise. And nobody who has ever watched a passion-play can doubt for a moment that that is how medieval people really did interpret the Jewish part in the crucifixion.

If one now turns from the medieval to the modern world, one makes an astonishing discovery. It is no coincidence that in this century the very same people have often dealt in tales of ritual murder and in the *Protocols,* because they were in both cases dealing in identical unconscious fears and hatreds. For, as their name indicates, the Elders of Zion, too, are father-figures; and what they do to nations is strictly comparable with what the "bad" father is imagined as doing to the son. They draw off the lifeblood of the nations and divert it to their own sinister purposes; they drive the peoples to torment and death in wars; they deprive millions of food. Above all, they have the monopoly of power. Mysterious, inscrutable, they manipulate and torment human beings who in their hands are as helpless and ignorant as children.

Now it is quite certain that this image of the Jew profoundly influenced Hitler himself. The psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson, has pointed out how mistaken it is to see Hitler as a father-figure: "Hitler is the adolescent who never even aspired to become a father in any connotation, nor, for that matter, a kaiser, a president. . . . He is the *Führer*: the glorified older brother, who replaces the father. . . . He is . . . a gang leader who keeps the boys together by demanding their admiration, by creating terror, and by shrewdly involving them in crimes from which there is no way back." The worst of these crimes were performed against the father, incarnated in the Jew. Another psychoanalyst, delving into Hitler's youth and family background, has found strong grounds for thinking that he unconsciously identified his own father with a particular Jewish doctor and so with Jews as a collectivity. If this is true, one may be sure that the process was greatly facilitated by the age-old unconscious identification of "the Jew" with the "bad" father.

It was often noted that the Jews whom the German troops in eastern Europe treated with the greatest cruelty were the Orthodox men with their long beards. The photographs of youngsters mocking, humiliating, and killing these men of truly patriarchal appearance provide a counterpart to the old woodcuts of ritual murder—but with this difference, that whereas the ritual murders were the merest fictions, the vengeance exacted was real murder, indefinitely repeated.

Yet that is not the whole story. The deepest fear of all is that Jews are, collectively, poisoners or even themselves a sort of poison. This fantasy took shape at the same time as the fantasy of ritual murder; the first occasions when the disappearance of young boys was attributed to Jewish blood-lust were in 1144 and 1168, and the first time when Jews—eighty-six of them—were burned for plotting to poison the Christian population was in 1161. By the 14th century, such accusations were commonplace. In France in 1321 it was reported that the Jews were employing lepers to poison all the wells in Christendom. At the time of the Black Death in 1321, it was widely believed that the Jews had caused the plague by poisoning the wells with a mixture of Christian flesh, hearts, and blood (obtained by ritual murder), and of spiders, frogs, and lizards. On that occasion, some three-hundred Jewish communities in Germany, France, and Spain were exterminated; and similar accusations were made, with similar results, at innumerable local plagues down to the mid-16th century. Not that the charges were limited to such emergencies—Martin Luther was expressing the general view when he wrote: "If [the Jews] could kill us all, they would gladly do so, aye, and often do it, especially those who profess to be physicians. They know all that is known about medicine in Germany; they can give poison to a man of which he will die in an hour, or in ten or twenty years; they thoroughly understand this art." As late as 1610, the medical faculty of the University of Vienna solemnly announced that Jewish physicians were obliged by their laws to poison every tenth Christian patient.

In the modern version of the myth of the Jew-

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ish world-conspiracy, these accusations reappear in a pseudo-scientific form. The *Protocols* themselves talk not only of using drink and loose women to undermine the physique of the Gentiles, but of actually inoculating the Gentiles with diseases; and in much *Protocols*-type literature, particularly in the United States, schemes for mass inoculation are interpreted as a Jewish plot to inject the population with syphilis. But here again it was Hitler who found the most effective and murderous formulation for an age-old obsession. By the peculiar interpretation which he gave to German racist theories, he made sexual intercourse with a Jew appear as something which literally poisoned the blood. In Nazi propaganda the idea was carried to the point where the Jews were habitually called "the world-poisoners" and were even themselves equated with bacteria.

Just as much as ritual murder, fantasies of this kind are rooted in the unconscious. Every psychoanalyst has had patients who are haunted by the illusion that they have taken in something bad, which is destroying them from within, or who live in perpetual dread of improbable infections; not to mention the true paranoiacs who are convinced that they are being poisoned by particular individuals. These are deep waters indeed, and this is not the place to speculate about etiologies on which specialists are by no means agreed. This much, however, can be safely said, that to imagine that the Jews have poisoned the water-supply or are corrupting people's blood is to ascribe to them truly uncanny powers. And it is certain that when anti-Semites kill not simply Jewish men but also Jewish women and children, when they see the extermination of all Jews as an indispensable cleansing or disinfection of the earth, they are moved by terrors stemming from the earliest stages of infancy.

There can be many kinds of unconscious negative projections, and it is a matter not merely of scientific interest but also of practical importance to appreciate just what projections have traditionally been attached to the Jews. It is often assumed that all ethnic prejudice is very much of a kind—that, for instance, hatred of Negroes must have precisely the same emotional roots as hatred of Jews; yet the assumption is certainly mistaken. It is of course true that the fanatical Negro-hater, say in the American South, is moved by unconscious as well as by conscious anxieties, and that his view of Negroes is gravely distorted by projections. It is also true that much of the cruelty to which Negroes have been subjected has been dictated by these projections. Yet however whites may see Negroes, they can hardly see them as father-figures, "good" or "bad." The fantasy of an infinitely powerful, world-dominating conspiracy does not, in fact, get projected onto Negroes, and that may well be why not even the most fanatical Negro-haters dream of genocide. It is a different matter with the Jews. In the most dangerous form of anti-Semitism, Jews are seen above all as "bad" parents, and this makes them seem so overwhelmingly powerful that the only way to cope with them is to destroy them utterly. That, it is suggested, is why from the 12th century to the 20th, the truly fanatical anti-Semites—the kind who deal in tales of ritual murder and in the *Protocols*—have so frequently fomented vast massacres. For the ultimate ideal of such people is not a world where they can lord it over Jews, as the white supremacist likes to lord it over Negroes, but a world where there are no Jews left at all.

THE HISTORICAL importance of the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy lies in the fact that it has served as a warrant for many massacres, culminating in attempted genocide in the middle of the present century. Again and again, over a period of some eight centuries, and over a wide range of countries, it has enabled organized groups to kill Jews. And it has done this in two ways, which seem to have remained pretty constant down the ages: by providing the organized groups with an ideology, and by discouraging the rest of the population from interfering.

Whether one considers the Black Hundreds of Tsarist Russia, or those sections of the *SS* and *SD* which were directly concerned in the "final solution," one finds very much the same combination of types; and so far as one can tell from the records, the same combination existed already in those earlier groups of Jew-killers which operated between the first crusade and the 16th century. It cannot be said that these groups consisted wholly of genuine fanatics. On the contrary, they contained plenty of purely destructive types, who wanted nothing but a chance to torture and murder, and also plenty of looters, whose main interest was in the property of the murdered. To these one must add, for the modern period, the opportunists at all levels, for whom the organizing and carrying through of massacres was simply a means to a better income, more security, and more prestige than they could otherwise have hoped for. Yet it seems certain that however narrow, materialistic, or downright criminal their own motives may be, such men cannot operate without an ideology behind them. At least when operating collectively, they need an ideology to legitimate their behavior, for without it they would have to see themselves and one another as what they really are—common thieves and murderers. And that, apparently, is something which even they cannot bear.

The ideology which has proved most suitable for the purpose is the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy, whether in the traditional form which centered on tales of ritual murder and well-poisoning, or in the modern form which centers on the *Protocols*. And this is where the true fanatics have their place—as bearers and elaborators

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of that fantastic view of the world on which the whole murderous enterprise depends for its justification. Thanks to various empirical investigations carried out by psychologists and psychoanalysts, notably in the United States, a great deal is known about the typical personality-structure of such people. What emerges when fanatical anti-Semites are subjected to psychological tests such as the Rorschach and thematic apperception tests is a quite abnormal degree of fear and hatred of parental figures, who are seen now as menacing and now as mutilated and killed. This means that the unconscious fantasies of such people correspond to the unconscious content of the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy. Fanatical anti-Semites are in fact people whose own deepest emotional needs compel them to see life as a struggle against just such a conspiracy as is portrayed in the *Protocols*. For them, belief springs from an inner necessity; and this gives them an air of absolute conviction, which in turn gives the criminals and opportunists the reassurance and encouragement they need.

A group formed out of these elements is, sociologically speaking, a very special kind of group indeed. Reflecting in 1946 on the extreme forms of Nazi anti-Semitism, the psychoanalyst Ernst Simmel remarked that the process of group-formation itself, when occurring under pathological conditions, can bring about a mass delusion, in fact a mass psychosis. And he added: "This clinical syndrome: unrestricted aggressive destructiveness under the spell of a delusion, in complete denial of reality, is well known to us as a psychosis; it is a paranoiac form of schizophrenia." The parallel is a suggestive one. For though the individuals who make up a group of Jew-killers are well within the bounds of reality, and most of them are not even fanatics, and even the fanatics are far from mad—yet it is perfectly true that the group as a whole behaves like a paranoiac in the grip of his delusion.

There is another peculiarity of such groups that reminds one of paranoiac schizophrenics: their megalomaniacal sense of mission. When it comes to describing their own role, not only the medieval Jew-killers but also the Black Hundreds and the Nazi leaders, use apocalyptic imagery taken straight from the Book of Revelations. All alike see themselves as the angelic hosts overthrowing the powers of darkness, or a collective St. Michael killing the dragon, even as a collective Christ overthrowing Antichrist. No army engaged in a real war against a real enemy has ever indulged in such self-exaltation as Jew-killers engaged in their one-sided struggle against an imaginary conspiracy. To hear them on the subject of themselves, one would think that killing unarmed and helpless people, including small children and old women, was a very brave and risky undertaking. It is a phenomenon which only begins to make sense when one recalls that a paranoiac murderer, too, can feel terrified of his harmless victims. For what these people see as the enemy is in fact the destructiveness and cruelty in their own psyches, externalized. And the greater the unconscious sense of guilt, the more fearsome the imaginary enemy.

For the sense of guilt is there, and unremittingly at work. Originally engendered by the murderous impulses felt by the small child toward its parents, it is enormously intensified by the real violence which the adult deploys against his victims. Yet it is not experienced as a sense of guilt, for it is completely denied and repressed into the unconscious. Instead, it is experienced as a sense of danger, of threat, a blind terror lest the wronged ones, the parents killed in fantasy and the parent-surrogates killed in reality, arise and exact retribution. This alone can explain the extraordinary paradox about the Nazi massacres—that as the Jews became more and more helpless, as they were killed in ever vaster numbers, so they were felt to be more and more powerful, malignant, and dangerous. It also accounts for the fact that a man like Goebbels, for whom anti-Semitism was at first little more than a technique of vote-catching, ended his days raving about the omnipotent Jewish rulers of the world. It was his own guilt-ridden unconscious that made of the imaginary Elders of Zion a power more terrible than the Nazi regime itself.

IT IS WHEN it has been adopted by groups of professional, organized Jew-killers that the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy has revealed its true potentialities. For all the indications are that however widespread and intense anti-Semitism may be, it does not result in killing unless and until such groups begin to operate. Pogroms as spontaneous outbreaks of popular fury seem to be a myth, and there is in fact no established case where the inhabitants of a town or village have simply fallen upon their Jewish neighbors and slaughtered them. This was true even in the middle ages—the great massacres which accompanied the people's crusades and the Black Death were all led by organized bands coming from outside. In modern times, popular initiative has been still less in evidence, for the organized groups themselves have been effective only when they were carrying out the policy and enjoying the sponsorship of some kind of government—whether in Tsarist Russia and under the "White" regime during the Russian civil war, or in Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe. Would-be *pogromshchiki* who lacked this kind of support and were resolutely opposed by the authorities—as in the United States—never managed to organize large-scale violence and soon lapsed, or were thrust, into obscurity.

Yet the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy can have its effect on the mass of the population too, and this in turn has a bearing, even if an

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indirect one, on the fate of the Jews. Centuries of propaganda about sorcery and ritual murder and the secret Jewish government produced a general atmosphere of superstitious dread which was largely unconnected with specific economic conflicts. A certain suspicion that Jews constitute a united collectivity, devoted to sinister aims and endowed with mysterious powers, was still extremely widespread in the first half of the present century. No doubt fanatical believers in the conspiracy, the true adepts of the *Protocols* were always a relatively small minority; but they were still numerous enough to make themselves heard, and there were vast numbers of half- and quarter-believers to pick up scraps of what they had to say. Particularly in periods of exceptional strain, anxiety, and disorientation, multitudes of people yielded to the temptation to blame all their troubles on the machinations of those uncanny beings —reacting to social and economic crises, for instance, very much as their ancestors had reacted to the plague.

What this meant in practice, whether in Tsarist Russia or in Germany after the First World War or to some extent throughout the world in the fateful years 1933-1945, was that people were unwilling to bestir themselves on behalf of the Jews. The very widespread indifference, the ease with which people dissociated themselves from the Jews and their fate, was certainly in part a result of a vague feeling that, even if there were no Elders of Zion, Jews were somehow uncanny and dangerous. And ironically enough, this feeling grew stronger as the persecution of the Jews grew worse. The explanation is plain, if depressing: when people know even with half their minds that a great injustice is being done, and lack the generosity or the courage to protest, they automatically throw the blame onto the victims as the simplest way of easing their own consciences. Just as the organized killers needed the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy if they were not to recognize themselves as common thieves and murderers, so did very many ordinary people need some smattering of it if they were not to see themselves as passive accomplices in the persecution and massacre of innocent people.

THE story of the *Protocols* is the story of how in 20th-century Europe a grossly delusional view of the world, based on infantile fears and hatreds, was able to find expression in murder and torture beyond all imagining. It is a case-history in collective psychopathology, and its deepest implications reach far beyond anti-Semitism and the fate of the Jews. Is it utopian to suggest that the more fully and widely these implications are faced, the better the chance of recognizing and limiting, perhaps even of forestalling, similar aberrations in the future?

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ERIC LARRABEE

SCIENCE AND THE COMMON READER

LOOKING BACK, one can see now that the third week of October 1945 was a major turning point. Raymond Gram Swing later called it "science week in Washington." This was the week that the Association of Los Alamos Scientists issued its first public statement, that three scientists, including Robert Oppenheimer, testified before Congress on a science foundation bill, and that Leo Szilard, Arthur Holly Compton, and others testified before the House Military Affairs Committee on the postwar future of atomic energy. This was the week that nuclear physicists emerged from the chrysalis of their innocence, captured the attention of politicians and public, and retrieved from the military—or so it seemed at the time—the initiative for large-scale, government-subsidized research. Science entered politics with a decisive abruptness, and with consequences of determining importance for the world of military-minded, international scientific competitiveness we live in, not to speak of the obscure and troubling future. Innocence, in the light of what has happened since, was the scientists' strongest weapon, and innocence was precisely what they thereupon lost. The sin that Oppenheimer was to say physicists had known was not so much to have "become Death, the shatterer of worlds," as it was to have descended irreversibly from the pedestal of rationality and dispassionateness, down into the dirty, exhilarating arena of power, money, influence, fantasy, and all the hosts of unreason fully armed. The shock of this encounter is with us yet.

Science is a—what? a method, a faith, a body of facts, a structure of theories, an institution, a way of life, a finite number of duly qualified individuals, an infinity of relevance and possibility. For a large number of scientists, science is indescribable, but indisputably a *thing*: it is knowable, palpable, reliable, usable. They live with it and by it. Existence would be unimaginable without it; it is simply and unequivocally *there*. Twice within a week, at a conference on science and social problems held at one of the national atomic energy installations, I have seen scientists (one of them the director of the laboratory) go to the blackboard saying, "Now here we have science," and then draw a circle: sealed, symmetrical, perfect. This to them seemed so natural and commonplace that they were, in a way, favoring the non-scientists present with a revelation of what, to them, was self-evident. They were pained and not a little uncomprehending at any objections to so useful and reasonable a symbol.

What, for that matter, is a scientist? A scientist is a man other scientists say is a scientist; and, while science is a great equalizer, some scientists are more equalized by it than others. It is possible to be more of, or less of, a scientist than is some other scientist. With rare exceptions, scientists are drawn from that group of persons trained by graduate study in the methods and intellectual discipline of one of the branches of physical knowledge. From this group comes a smaller number who practice "real" science in the sense of conducting investigations into the unknown on the frontier of their specialties, and of this group a smaller number still are doing, in the judgment of their peers, significant work. By the time the level of this inner core is reached, we are dealing with a manageable quantity of people. Those who make it their business to keep abreast of a given specialty know where the "interesting" work is being done and who is doing it; they know one another. The answer to the question of how any scientist manages to read all the publications in his field is very often that he doesn't; he reads what his friends tell him about, and what he reads is the "real" science he and other "real" scientists know and trust.

In short, this is a guild and there is a hierarchy within it. One might wish, for the sake of scientists' sensibilities, that less pejorative words existed to describe the phenomenon of which they form a part. It would be more tactful and tactically more sound to avoid arousing the apprehensions they legitimately feel when the domain of science is invaded by alien terminologies—for example, the terminology of history. Modern science as an enterprise is visibly the product of 19th-century Western Europe, and much scientific behavior is still conditioned by its origins, espe-

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cially in Germany, and by the imprint of the university laboratory or the weighty apparatus of the graduate degree. There are still traces of Germanic pedantry, a touch of the *Herr Geheimrat*, in the literary manners and customs of science which have nothing to recommend them but familiarity and habit: citation by last name only, avoidance of the first-person pronoun or the active voice, and the other compulsory devices for cultivating a spurious rhetoric of impersonality. But to interest a scientist in the language of science as such, as a meaningful problem worthy of his own professional attention, you would have to tell him more than this—and, I suppose, reluctant as I am to say it, rightly so.

THE scientists like their system because they think it works. The physicists who came to Washington in 1945 were the emissaries, so thoroughly representative that they seldom consciously thought about it, of a going concern. They were innocent at least in part because they had no need to be otherwise; they already carried with them, as a matter of course, the scientist's regulation-portable-emergency kit containing a mystique, a program, an organization, an intelligence service, and a reasonable guarantee as to the purity of one's own motives. Their strength was therefore as the strength of ten; and their labors were crowned with the consequences we now see everywhere around us: Big Science, the independent semi-autonomous subculture of pure and applied research, supported by taxation but ultimately accountable only to itself. They were attractive, enterprising personalities, and the recent account of their adventure—Alice Kimball Smith's *A Peril and a Hope**—fully conveys the alertness with which they rose to the historical moment, crested with the wave, and rode it with a skill no less masterly for being half-conscious, self-deprecating, and—in the best sense of the word—naive. They believed in their own mission, and they fought for it in good conscience.

To keep atomic energy out of military hands seemed at the time self-evidently desirable, and it would have taken more than human prescience to foresee that in the relatively short run of two decades the victory would appear to have made so little difference; certainly the Defense Department has not suffered from any shortage of fissionable materials. The significant victory was for the principle of autonomy in science. We speak, the physicists said in effect, for a delicate social mechanism which is fully capable of managing its own affairs, which could not, in fact, operate at full efficiency under any other form of control, least of all the finicky, bureaucratic shortsightedness that atomic scientists associated with the U. S. Army and, hence, the U. S. government. They won the point, and were promptly surfeited with success. One of the many virtues of Mrs. Smith's admirable book is its ironic, affectionate portrayal of the disintegration which set in, within the scientists' "movement," after both the crisis and the McMahon bill passed and all seemed, if not well, at least tolerable. Her other virtues include appreciation for, and tact in the description of, variations in human personality. The drama she is describing would not have been the same had it involved a different set of actors; the fact that they were scientists did not prevent the uniqueness of their individualities from imposing itself on the unrolling of events. Some of them, like Oppenheimer and Szilard, are idiosyncratic to a degree which would tax any writer, yet she handles them with an understanding—and, behind it, a warmth—far greater than any literal construction of her text would indicate. She writes, for example, of one Szilard draft for a scientists' manifesto containing a paragraph on birth control "which he was with difficulty persuaded to delete as being irrelevant to the main purpose"—a phrase which speaks volumes about that greatly gifted, obtuse, intrigue-infatuated man. She also sets to rest a number of the legends, among them that of the physicists holding skull-sessions in relativity for awestruck senators, which turns out on inspection to amount to one cocktail party at the Gifford Pinchots'.

As they gained control, of course, the physicists could also have known no more than a fraction of how explosively science was about to grow. The mathematical measures—the number of scientific journals, the number of articles and abstracts published, the size of university budgets and allocated federal grants, or operating energy of the nuclear particle accelerators—all were increasing at a geometrical rate; the curves were going exponential, turning sharply upwards, as though to indicate some violent shift in the axis of reference which had rendered all previous coordinates obsolete. Such, at least, is the conclusion a non-scientist might offer to proponents of the newly minted "science of science," who are very fond of plotting curves, most of which turn monotonously toward the vertical. Hint to investigators: if all your curves come out exponential, consider the possibility that (1) the millennium has arrived, (2) you are holding the graphs upside down, or (3) you have not yet found the one variable worth measuring.

But in 1945, the instincts of the physicists were sound. Science could take bigness in stride (as it has by and large done) because it had the machinery at hand to cope with expansion: a skeleton managerial structure of panels and review boards, a cadre of potential administrators from the wartime experience, and a network of information and control based on personal contact (not too different, as Don Price notes, from the one within the military based on the service academies). The

* *A Peril and a Hope: The Scientists' Movement in America 1945-47*, University of Chicago Press, 1965, 591 pp., $10.00.

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monstrous scale of the enlargement has disguised the marvel of the fact that it was possible. When scientists say their system works, what they mean is that their committees still arrive at decisions generally acceptable to the scientific community. A directorate of interlocking panels, made up of several hundred men at the most, presided over the conversion of science from a private minority luxury into a predominant public one and—with only a handful of conspicuous disasters—they have brought it off.

Big Science is what bothers people. It even bothers the scientists, who are beginning to be curious about how they trapped themselves in a situation where everybody thinks they are getting more money than, in fact, they are. In what Daniel S. Greenberg has called "the era of pork-barrel science," in which government spends twice as much on research and development as it does on public works—and more on high-energy physics than on cancer—there are naturally many voices asking to be heard on questions of science policy. The idea is widely entertained that defense industry congregates automatically around the high-prestige research centers, a phenomenon otherwise known as the Route 128 syndrome—after the Boston circumferential highway bordered with laboratories and new-era corporations, presumed to be drawn there by the magnetism of Harvard and M.I.T. Belief in this principle, whether justified or not, has led congressmen and many of their constituents to take an active interest in where the science money goes, now that there is so much of it and so much else depends on science. The location, say, of a new nuclear particle accelerator, which before long might cost a billion dollars to build and hundreds of millions a year to operate, becomes a subject of intense political contention. Mr. Greenberg has reported how FFAGS, a device called a Fixed Field Alternating Gradient Synchrotron, proposed by physicists in the Midwest, aroused such internecine warfare among both scientists and politicians that finally the decision whether or not to build it had to be made by the President himself. (He said no.)

YET EVEN this budgetary affluence may conceal slim pickings for an actual scientist at the far end of the pipeline. The president of the American Geophysical Union, Dr. George P. Woollard, has gone so far as to say that government support of basic research is being so curtailed that a "crisis in science" exists, comparable to the poverty of the Appalachian coal fields. The director of the National Science Foundation says that many first-rate scientists are not receiving enough support for their research, and the National Academy of Sciences has published a survey indicating "for the first time in the history of physics in the United States," that "budgetary limitations threaten our ability even to sustain productive continuing activity. . . ." Thus do standards rise; thus does any topic become tangled and unclear, once it enters into the area of public policy where passions and *partis pris* are commonplace, for the politician, but still upsetting to the straightforward scientist.

The coexistence of science with government has become a subject in its own right, suitable for being studied in institutes, written about in richly documented treatises, and—presumably, in the fullness of time—taught in universities to aspirants to the doctoral degree. Anyone wishing to gain a minimal understanding of its rudiments might begin by reading Don K. Price's *Government and Science,* James L. McCamy's *Science and Public Administration,* Robert Gilpin and Christopher Wright's *Scientists and National Policy-Making,* Caryl Haskins's *The Scientific Revolution and World Politics,* M. C. Goodall's *Science and the Politician,* Ralph E. Lapp's *The New Priesthood,* Jerome B. Wiesner's *Where Science and Politics Meet,** and doubtless a dozen others that I have either forgotten about, or that will be published between now and the time these words see print. On the other hand, anyone too distracted to go the whole course might prefer to settle for a single book, in which case his choice should be Don Price's *The Scientific Estate,*† the author's second time around on the subject and something of a triumph of subtlety and aspiration. Dean Price is interested in administrative structure, the framework of principalities and powers which determine whether something can or cannot be done. As a practical man, he has become interested in theory, perceiving as he does that men are often at the mercy of their assumptions and that (as Keynes said of businessmen and economists) the most empirical of us is often responding to the precepts of some long-dead theorist. Price therefore sees the need for a theoretical —and, by implication, constitutional—skeleton on which to hang our practical discoveries about the conflict between knowledge and power, the tension between the polar opposites of thought and action. He wants us to recognize, morally and intellectually, the realities which condition the life of science today. He sees that the present uneasy partnership between disinterested knowledge and political decision-making is in itself neither good nor evil, but simply a condition of the future—the only avenue by which our world of complexity and perilous possibilities can be restrained and rationalized for the common good. He is almost preternaturally without prejudice; neither scientists nor politicians, as such, aggravate or intimidate him. He knows them. He has

* Price: New York University Press, 203 pp., $3.75.; McCamy: University of Alabama Press, 218 pp., $3.50; Gilpin and Wright: Columbia University Press, 307 pp., $7.95.; Haskins: Harper & Row, 115 pp., $3.50; Goodall: Schenkman Publ. Co., 83 pp., $2.65; Lapp: Harper & Row, 245 pp., $4.95; Wiesner: McGraw-Hill, 303 pp., $6.95.

† Harvard University Press, 323 pp., $5.95.

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lived in the crossfire himself (he crops up in Mrs. Smith's *A Peril and a Hope*, incidentally, as one of the protagonists, the man then charged with scientific matters in the Bureau of the Budget) and when he writes about it you can hear the whine of the ricochets and smell the powder. Like Mrs. Smith's, this is a book about science that a humanist might be able to read; the only adequate word for it is "sophisticated."

Dean Price is not a natural but a political scientist—which is to say, by guild standards, no scientist at all. It is in fact notable how few of the books on the subject (including the list above) have been written by practicing scientists of the proper kind. One might make an exception for Dr. Wiesner, if only his book settled as many issues as are raised by its title and *his* title, or titles, as former Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, chairman of the President's Science Advisory Committee, chairman of the Federal Council for Science and Technology, and now Dean of the School of Science at M. I. T. Dr. Wiesner is widely and deeply revered, which may be why so many of his reviewers (with the exception of James R. Newman, who must have been feeling contentious) gave the impression of reviewing the author rather than the book. Dr. Wiesner himself could never be accused of lacking sophistication, but I would hesitate to say the same about *Where Science and Politics Meet*. Portions of it are in effect policy papers, written in the sort of sensible, impersonal, well-intentioned language which Washington secretes spontaneously; it has authority, coming from this source, but much of it reads as though it could have been written by anybody. The style is the man, as far as the reader is concerned, and this style conveys a no doubt unintentional effect of sidestepping the really awkward or interesting aspects of the subject. It isn't what Dr. Wiesner says, but what he doesn't say, that bothers Mr. Newman, who would have appreciated "at least a few misgivings and doubts" about the massive federal subsidizing of science, "rather than merely contriving the best formula for annually increasing the contribution." As the poet Roy Campbell once remarked of T. S. Eliot, he handles the bridle and the bit all right, but where's the bloody horse?

There is more here than a matter of rhetoric. The difficulties posed by Dr. Wiesner's prose style lie at the heart of what has been called the Nth Culture Problem, or the dilemma of the common reader when he confronts (as confront it *he must*) the arrival of science as a dominant institution in the national life. There is no scientific way of deciding how much of the gross national product should be devoted to scientific research; there is not even any scientific way of deciding how that figure, once arrived at, is to be divided between high-energy physics, going to the moon, or—as C. P. Snow has recently suggested—resolving the crisis of poverty and hunger in the nonindustrial regions of this planet Earth. There is no scientific way, that is, of directing and disciplining Big Science; there is only the political way, and though politicians and voters may know little and care less whether a Fixed Field Alternating Gradient Synchrotron should or should not be built, they are going to be making such decisions with increasing frequency.

Add to this the obligation on the common reader (vehemently set forth by Martin Green in *Science and the Shabby Curate of Poetry**) to take account of science as part of the permanent furniture of the modern mind, or—as I think Peter Viereck once put it—the characteristic art form of the 20th century. Now the common reader is more probably than not a humanist, at least to the extent that humanists invented him, brood about him, and attempt to make some sense of the environment he inhabits; and the full-scale encounter of humanist with scientist, resounding with the clash of firmly held beliefs, is a long-term campaign in which the present political episode may ultimately seem like a minor skirmish. (It was well engaged long before C. P. Snow put his label on it, and had already included battles of which he seems not to have had full reports.) The scientist, in other words, is entering as a newcomer the world of common discourse in which the humanist already feels himself to be at home. The scientist, even with all the modesty he can muster, rather imagines that he has arrived on the scene to take charge of it, but there are a lot of people already in residence who would politely (more or less) like a look at his credentials—which is why the whole spectacle is one of the most fascinating displays of intellectual culture-shock we are likely to witness in our lifetime.

READING Dr. Wiesner is a case in point. It is a little like talking to somebody at a cocktail party who is continually looking over your shoulder for somebody else. I do not know whom he is talking to; I only know he is not talking to me. At one stage he announces that he is going "to clear up a continuing source of misunderstanding" about the relationship between science and technology, which would be a highly desirable thing to do, since there is indeed a great deal of misunderstanding on this score, particularly among the scientists who scorn technology as a form of diluted and debased science, practiced by a lower caste of humanity known as engineers. The relationship is extremely rich and complex, criss-crossed with paradoxes and cut through with puzzling gaps where there unexpectedly seem to be no connections whatever between the two. Only recently has the study of technology in its own right begun to reveal the full extent to which science has been dependent on it, rather than the other way

* Norton, 159 pp., $5.00.

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around—the extent to which science, in the famous phrase of Professor Henderson of Harvard, owes more to the steam engine than the steam engine owes to science. (An irreverent paraphrase of this, based on a photograph of Dr. Oppenheimer in the late 1940's, held that the pork-pie hat owed less to physics than physics owed to the pork-pie hat—or to its owner's anguished, saintly face.)

To reduce the scientist's unjustified disdain for technology, however, does not appear to be Dr. Wiesner's aim. He says that the confusion he wants to "clear up" is not surprising because modern technology owes so much to modern science, which at the very least one would expect most of his scientific readers already to believe. If they are confused, their confusion consists in believing on insufficient evidence precisely what he is telling them. It appears, however, that he is not addressing his fellow scientists but rather the uninstructed outsider who will be illuminated to know that Thomas Edison "in reality, was more of an inventor than a scientist," surely not a clarifying remark to direct at anyone who had hitherto given any attention to that insulting but necessary distinction. He goes on to make passing reference to the vacuum tube among inventions "made by men with special knowledge; inventors who have an understanding of a scientific field and who base their creations on an intimate familiarity with that field. . . ." No one has ever paid a nicer compliment to Lee de Forest, who did indeed "invent" the vacuum tube in the sense that he made one first and secured a patent for it which was ultimately upheld by the courts. But the man who had the "understanding of the scientific field" was not de Forest at all but the late Edwin H. Armstrong, who came along afterward and in a series of papers explained to scientists what was actually going on inside de Forest's gadget. Then and only then could the subsequent development of the vast field of electronics commence. The inventor preceded the scientist, and he did his inventing without science's help. The proper scientist would rather have it the other way around, since that makes a neater theory, but in the hard exact humanities like history and biography, such a cavalier disregard for facts is somewhat frowned upon. The lonely genius of Howard Armstrong and the gamy shiftiness of Lee de Forest affect one's judgment, but not the data.

The point would not be worth lingering over if it did not bear so directly on all the other questions of how much value society is to place on pure scientific research, how it is to allocate its resources for the greatest common benefit, and how seriously it is to take the claims of scientists when they speak in their own self-interest. The fuzziness, the lack of focus in Dr. Wiesner's argument comes from his inability to visualize any reader of sufficient intelligence to be taken seriously; he does not conceive of himself as engaged in conversation with an informed layman, with someone who knows a lot but on some other subject, who will not be patronized. Like far too many scientists, he does not act in any awareness that any such person exists, and it is a fatal flaw. Scientists are greatly given to hurt feelings; whenever a book appers that ruffles their sensitivities—like Jacques Barzun's *Science: the Glorious Entertainment* or Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*—the cries of anguish and outrage are piteous to hear. Perhaps the time has come for them to wonder about why they sometimes jar the nerves and try the patience of non-scientists.

THE HUMANIST who looks at science from the viewpoint of his own endeavors is bound to be impressed, first of all, by its startling lack of insight into itself. Scientists seem able to go about their business in a state of indifference to, if not ignorance of, anything but the going, currently acceptable doctrines of their several disciplines. Science maintains no museum for its mistakes. Its body of truth consists at any moment of those findings which have survived; the false starts and the blind alleys are no longer of interest. Its picture of its own history is therefore an arbitrary selection of the successful strikes, the lodes that panned out, a retrospective map made up of nothing but the roadways which led, as though inevitably, to the point where we now stand. This is not history but historicism, the imputation of pattern and purpose to the mere passage of time. The scientist is so committed to the notion of cumulative knowledge that only with the greatest effort can he regard himself as historically equal with his predecessors. It is almost as though he were cut off by temperament and training from any detached perspective on the nature of his own enterprise.

The one thing the humanist knows about the past is that it didn't *have* to happen as it did. The alternatives are veiled; but the challenge, the labor, and the art for a historian is to unveil them, to blank out all the benefits of his own hindsight, and to live poised on the edge of the problematical immediate moment alongside the long-vanished men and women whose lives he is trying to recreate and share. To some degree, there is a tide in the affairs of science which makes some of its developments seem next to inevitable; they sit there nesting in the bosom of time, waiting only for the moment when they can take wing and fly, if not this year then next, if not under this man's name then some other's. The phenomenon of simultaneous discovery, as with Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, confirms scientists in their conviction that the order they find in nature is a given, already there, waiting only to be teased forth a fragment at a time.

The Darwinian revolution is the primeval, archetypical example of how humanist and scientist can differ in their view of the same event. It

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is ideologically the greatest of all scientific revolutions, the culmination of three hundred years of effort to establish science as the final arbiter on questions about physical reality. Darwin's victory made such a deep impression that it came to seem the type case of all scientific revolutions, as it was, for example, to Andrew Dickson White, the venerable first president of Cornell who wrote a two-volume *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom,* the title amply indicating his point if view. White read the Darwinian triumph backward into the past, treating the history of science as a series of great battles between the liberating force of science and the restraint of organized religion, a view it has taken historians of science several generations to unlearn. Memories of the conflict are still fresh, and live nerves are still there to be touched. To the scientist, Darwin is deservedly a hero, and still entitled to a hero's immunity from irony or contradiction.

Miss Himmelfarb's offense was in writing of the Darwinian revolution as a phenomenon in the history of ideas, rather than an exercise of homiletics in the devotional literature of evolutionary biology. When the scientist looks at Darwin, his attention is drawn to all the tendril hints of anything we now believe. Darwin was on the right track, and by following it we have now (we assume) got things right; that he might have got anything wrong therefore becomes irrelevant, and Miss Himmelfarb is called to account (as by Ernst Mayr in *Scientific American*) for being unfamiliar with the latest monographs in the journals of biology. But the historian of ideas looks in the same direction and sees something quite different, an event called the Darwinian revolution which—like so many of mankind's mixed-up and cloudy affairs—is not everything it appears on the surface to be. He sees, as Joseph Wood Krutch put it in exaggerated form, "that Darwinism as first propounded was unoriginal in what it attempted to prove and erroneous in the assumptions on which the proof rests; that Darwin revolutionized man's thinking by propounding a familiar but untenable theory."

Professor Lancelot Hogben, who is a proper scientist and certainly not anti-Darwin, argues in an elegant little book called *Science in Authority** that we cannot properly assess the effect of Darwin's teaching except against the background of the times, particularly the racial controversies over the slave trade and the contest between ecclesiastical and secular authorities over control of the British educational system. He lists a number of preconditions which had to exist before Darwin's achievement was possible, even setting aside such obvious ones as the publication of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* or Chambers's *Vestiges of Creation,* the latter of which Darwin himself said served as a lightning rod to draw attacks away from his own work when it finally appeared. Hogben lists, for example, three major developments which took place during the thirty years before the *Origin*: (1) oceanic navigation under steam power made possible, for the first time, a global catalogue of all living things; (2) surveying in England and hence geological mapping, begun during the period of canal building, received new impetus from the construction of railroads; and (3) optical technology brought about marked improvements in the microscope and telescope. Remove Darwin from this context, and there is no Darwinian revolution.

This is the view the humanist is fighting to preserve, against—it must be admitted—considerable odds, his own narrowness and ineptitude among them. To him, science is not a thing; it is what scientists do, a humane venture, embedded in the human condition, with all the glorious and disconcerting consequences thereof. It cannot be studied fully and accurately apart from the history of ideas—cannot be studied by laymen, least of all, except as one of the humanities. As science now moves into the mainstream of communal activities, it brings this scrutiny from outsiders upon itself; it asks to be validated as something more than the undistracted pursuit of its own private goals. It puts itself on display as an institution, with any institution's foibles and failings, and thereby makes itself a legitimate object of rude comment from the lower orders despite the fact, to C. P. Snow's dismay, that they may be ignorant of the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

The only thing wrong with scientists is that they don't understand science. They don't know where their own institution came from, what forces shaped and are still shaping it, and they have wedded themselves to an anti-historical way of thinking which threatens to deter them from ever finding out. They should not be surprised if their plea for greater authority over the rest of us falls, if not on deaf, at least on skeptical, ears. Science is too important to be left to the scientists. They can no longer arrive unaided even at the decisions of public policy which must be made for science itself; and, were they wise, they would not wish to. One sentence in Lancelot Hogben's *Science in Authority* so delights the author that he has put it on the title page, in italics, as a motto: "No society is safe in the hands of so few clever people."

* W. W. Norton, 157 pp., $5.00.

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T. V. LoCICERO

THE MURDER OF RABBI ADLER

According to his teachers at the University of Michigan, where he majored in political science, Richard Wishnetsky was a brilliant young man. John Higham, professor of history, once described his qualities as follows: "1. intense intellectual curiosity and genuine excitement about ideas; 2. strong sense of the importance of philosophical beliefs, especially natural law; 3. great clarity and logical rigor of thought; 4. judicious and scholarly but nevertheless lively way of handling problems. Personally, he is polite, likable and extremely eager. Although not without some decided convictions, he is keenly aware of not having most of the answers." Frank Grace, professor of political science, had a similar impression of Richard: "I have never known a young man more eager to learn and more willing to expend the effort which learning requires. He is supremely gifted and will in my opinion become an original and creative scholar."

In his junior year, Richard was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and upon his graduation in 1964, he was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for further study at the University of Detroit. It was not his academic career, however, that gave him the most satisfaction according to Jonathan Rose, his dormitory mate, who said, "Richard considered the high point of his student life the time he had a chance to touch President Kennedy after that famous speech given at Ann Arbor on founding the Peace Corps. He talked about joining the Peace Corps for a long while after that, then he talked about attending the London School of Economics, but neither of those things happened, unfortunately."

Some who knew Richard in Ann Arbor maintain that a direct line can be drawn between his reaction to the assassination of Kennedy and the later events in his life. Because the assassination disturbed him so deeply, it may also have impressed him with the remarkable extent to which a public outrage can affect private individuals, and it may have activated his sense of the necessity for rigid, absolute answers to questions he had previously been willing to explore with tolerance and patience.

In any case, Richard Wishnetsky's life apparently took a new turn the summer following the assassination, when—after graduation from Michigan—he went on a trip to Israel. There, he became intensely interested in one of the ultra-orthodox Hasidic sects and its idea of a "holy life." He had received some religious training at Detroit's Conservative Shaarey Zedek congregation, of which his parents were members, but prior to his trip he had exhibited no great concern with matters of faith. In September 1964, after his return home, he began work on a master's degree in sociology at the University of Detroit. Soon, however, he was including courses in comparative religion and spending more and more of his time reading theology.

Changes were also occurring in his personal life. He had moved into an apartment with two other young men, one of whom, Patrick J. Burke, later reported: "Occasionally he would talk about what he thought was wrong with the world or about thinking the Jewish people were not living up to the tenets of their religion. At first it all was in the nature of calm discussion, which grew gradually more excited as the weeks went past. After a few months, Richard started talking against specific people." Often upset and irrational, Richard would argue senselessly and viciously with his parents, friends, and professors, then fly into tantrums, knocking over furniture and threatening violence. According to Dr. Sander J. Breiner, a psychiatrist, and a friend of the Wishnetsky family, "From a quiet and well-mannered individual, Richard turned into a poor-mannered and bellicose young man. Where he used to discuss issues and listen to others' opinions, he suddenly knew all the answers and was argumentative. He began to issue pronouncements."

Though he quickly alienated most of his teachers and allowed his academic work to deteriorate, Richard did manage to make at least one friend among the faculty of the University of Detroit—Joyce Carol Oates, a writer, and a member of the English department. Richard walked into her office one day in the spring of 1965 and engaged her in what was to be the first in a series of long conversations. "It was all there on that first day,"

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Miss Oates has said, "the latent violence, the scornful refutations, the sense that the majority of people are somehow wrong and therefore contemptible. But he had flashes of insight and good humor; he was charming. He could recognize at times his own audacity, his table-pounding egotism, and nod in agreement with my sometimes harsh judgments of him—in those occasional tender moments of self-illumination that made him unforgettably human."*

In the course of these talks, Richard told Miss Oates that "if God did not exist, life was not worth living and he would commit suicide." Moreover, he once mentioned casually, "with a smile, that if he did commit suicide—which he would not—it would be in the synagogue during Sabbath services."

IN MAY of 1965, on the advice of a family physician, Richard's parents asked their son to submit to psychiatric testing and therapy. Richard agreed, but after a few visits to a psychiatrist, he abandoned treatment. Shortly thereafter, following one of his tantrums, his parents picked him up at his apartment at four A.M. and placed him in the Haven, a private mental institution in nearby Rochester.

On July 29, 1965, with Richard still in the Haven but bitterly unhappy and anxious to leave, his father, Edward Wishnetsky, the owner of an insurance agency, petitioned probate court for Richard's admission to Ypsilanti State Hospital. At the time, Mr. Wishnetsky said of his son:

"He has been extremely hostile, belligerent, and threatening recently. He has threatened to smear his family with scandal although in reality there is no scandal to spread. He has threatened to burn up his mother's car and the family home. He broke his mother's golf club in a fit of anger. He also broke a large glass table top at home. He has threatened to smear the University of Detroit with scandal if they did not prematurely release his scholarship funds to him so that he could use these funds to go to Europe instead of to the university. He has been extremely hyperactive, does not sleep, makes innumerable phone calls day and night, says he is going to get a date with President Johnson's daughters. He is at times very depressed, alternating with a very agitated, frenzied behavior. Although very bright, he uses his intellect to verbally slaughter those around him in a very belligerent and hostile manner."

Statements from two doctors, who maintained that Richard was mentally ill, a danger to himself and others, accompanied Mr. Wishnetsky's petition, which was granted: on August 19, 1965, Richard entered the state hospital. Ten days later he was permitted the freedom of the hospital grounds, and on September 9 he left the institution permanently with the help of an attorney he knew. The court, acting on the advice of two psychiatrists at the hospital, later ruled that Richard be officially discharged.

In one of their conversations, Richard told Dr. Breiner that "he thought his stay in the hospital was one of the best things that ever happened to him, although he didn't make it clear why. And he appeared to be calmer. Before he went into the hospital, he'd often say things like, 'There's nothing wrong with me, it's the world,' but after he got out he recognized he had a problem." Indeed, after his stay in the hospital, Richard paid several visits to two psychiatrists, one of whom wrote to the court on December 3, saying: "At the present time, he seems very well controlled. He is working well in his relationship with me and I do not anticipate the need for hospitalization."

Yet Richard stayed with neither doctor very long and—according to Dr. Breiner—was constantly running away from people who might have been able to help him. Dr. Breiner recalls that "Whenever I talked to Richard about his problem, he would smile and say, 'I know . . . but.' "

The fall and early winter of 1965 were a chaotic time for Richard: living at home with his parents but disappearing without a word for days at a time; running to and from psychiatrists, friends, and acquaintances, all terribly worried about him; returning to his former roommates to blame them for his troubles and insisting they were against him since they had not tried to get him out of the hospital; attending classes at Wayne State University in Detroit and giving religious lectures on the campus; visiting in Brooklyn, long after midnight, with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who advised him to study Judaism thoroughly and to wait until he was fifty before turning to comparative religion; working as a substitute teacher in Detroit public schools; writing tormented letters which he left unmailed.

One such letter, dated October 20 and later found with other personal writings and belongings, reads:

"I think too much. I don't think enough. I want to be me—I am only the welter of my anxieties, fears and superficialities. I do not walk, I stumble. I do not live, I respond to stimuli. I do not live, I exist. I am not a man, just a body. I live, yet I am dead. The only anguish I experience is that of self-pity and becoming aware of my own horrid, pervasive, unacceptable and contemptible selfishness, my own inability to love. When I am not miserable I am a phony."

The same letter includes a prayer:

"Let my life be a testimony to Thy diverse truths, let it be one of beauty and of justice, for its roots shall be in love and reason. Oh, God, I want to live! Let me! And then let my life go beyond justice, beyond vengeance; let it emerge into the pure understanding of mercy."

Through all of this, Richard continued to dream and plan on an impressive scale. Earlier in

* From an article in the Detroit *Free Press*, March 6, 1966.

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the year he had applied for admission to the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought to work with Mircea Eliade, Saul Bellow, and Hannah Arendt. Admission was granted and Eliade agreed to supervise his work on a thesis involving a study of "the creation and destruction of philosophy"—its creation begun by Aristotle and its destruction initiated by Descartes and completed by Nietzsche.

Richard had also applied to, and was accepted by, the university's divinity school, where he wanted to work with Paul Tillich. But on October 22, two days after Richard wrote his prayer, Paul Tillich died of a heart ailment at the age of seventy-nine.

On February 1, 1966 Richard began writing a tract entitled, "Fantasy Regarding an Assassination of Robert S. McNamara" which eventually covered six pages in longhand. It contains an apology for his imagined murder of the Secretary of Defense, along with a bitter, rambling commentary on himself and the world in which he was trying to live. He begins:

"My act was motivated by philosophical and social reasons, not political ones. It is a protest, the registration of an outrage, a dire warning. Its author entertains no illusions as to its bringing about any immediate substantial change in the American scene. At present I do believe there will be a change in the future—a change for the worse. The selfishness, stupidity and vanity of men shall succeed in triumphing over whatever goodness there is, the ultimate being obliteration, both spiritual and physical, of this planet. Hail brave new world! Hail nothingness!"

Of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Richard writes:

"[He] symbolizes that which I despise—the business mentality which is more concerned with material matters than human matters—the kind of mentality (Protestant ethic) which is most responsible for the dehumanization of society, the prostitution of intellect, resulting in a very bright but neither wise nor profound man. . . . He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword. How much did Mr. McNamara take into consideration the killing of innocent Vietnamese which has resulted from American bombings, for this killing is murder?"

He is full of bitter contempt for the quality of American life:

"The church has become a hypocrisy whose structures no longer find genuine residence in the souls of those who hear them. And most importantly and most sadly of all, the family is swiftly becoming—if it has not already arrived there—shot to hell. . . . I am part of the bastard progeny of this nation. We are building not men, but a generation of barbarians and mediocrities who recognize and will breed no value higher than their paltry selfish selves. Zombies. . . . Judaism in America does not need to worry about anti-Semitism destroying it from without. The American Jewish community is destroying itself from within. Shaarey Zedek is a synagog which bears witness against God."

About himself, Richard writes:

"My life will probably end with a whimper—a depressed whimper. Possibly with a bang. Since I cannot live like a man, I hope to die like one. I am entering the final stage of unreality. . . . You say that I am sick—you are right. You dismiss me because I am sick—in that you are wrong. . . . The dark side of creativity is sickness. . . . Anyway, in our society to be normal is to be sick, to be hung up on loneliness, insecure about one's stature, uncertain about one's self, overly concerned about pleasing everybody, being 'nice' all the time—damn niceness! . . . not offending anyone, so that one winds up pleasing no one and, to boot, not knowing who or why one is."

Richard included a "last will and testament" in this document, leaving whatever money he possessed to the Jewish National Fund and the Lubavitcher Hasidim. Two days later, on February 3, he traveled to Toledo, Ohio, where the laws governing the purchase of firearms are less strict than in Michigan. In a Toledo pawnshop he paid $72.05 for a twenty-year-old .32 caliber Colt revolver with its former five-inch barrel sawed off to one inch. (Two weeks before, the pawnshop had bought the gun for $10.00.) Back in his parents' home, Richard tested the weapon in the basement and—according to a friend—stated that firing the gun gave him a "sense of power."

On Monday, February 7, Richard reported to the Fort Wayne army induction center for examination and was promptly found unacceptable for military service. The next day he returned to the psychiatrist he had not seen for two months. Richard's parents were heartened by his apparent renewal of interest in treatment, but on Thursday, their son once more disappeared from home without a word.

On Friday evening, February 11, Richard checked into a small Detroit hotel. In a large leather satchel, he carried a change of clothes; toilet articles; a number of books, including *The Brothers Karamazov,* a Bible, works by Ortega y Gasset and Nietzsche; some records featuring the Soviet Army Chorus and Band, Joan Baez, Igor Stravinsky, Arturo Toscanini, and Theodore Bikel; and his gun.

In his copy of *The Brothers Karamazov,* Richard had underlined a passage which describes Alyosha, the gentle and forgiving Karamazov; in the margin he had written, "Me." The passage reads:

> . . . Add to that that he was to a certain extent a young man of our times, that is, honest by nature, demanding truth, seeking it, believing in it, and believing in it, demanding to serve it

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with all the strength of his soul, yearning for an immediate act of heroism and wishing to sacrifice everything, even life itself, for that act of heroism.

Apparently he did not give similar attention to the lines that immediately follow:

> . . . these young men unhappily fail to understand that the sacrifice of life is, in many cases, the easiest of all sacrifices, and that to sacrifice, for instance, five or six years of their seething youth to hard and tedious study, if only to multiply tenfold their powers of serving the truth and the cause they have set before them as their goal—such a sacrifice is utterly beyond the strength of many of them.

THE SATURDAY morning of February 12, 1966—Lincoln's birthday—was unseasonably warm, with the temperature near 40 degrees and a light mixture of rain and snow falling. Late that morning, Richard arrived at the huge, impressive synagogue of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in suburban Southfield, northwest of Detroit—a building which presents a massive and oblique triangular thrust to the western sky. Dressed neatly in a suit and tie, he unobtrusively took a seat in front and listened to Rabbi Morris Adler speak about Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. The point of the sermon was that Lincoln—destroyed at the apex of his service to mankind by a deranged and frustrated critic—was a truly religious man even though he did not belong to any church.

Rabbi Adler, a tall, bearded, barrel-chested man of athletic build, was an eloquent speaker who bore his learning lightly. A scholar and theologian of considerable repute, he had contributed articles and essays to numerous magazines and had written and edited several books on the Talmud. A school had been named after him in Israel, where he had recently spent a year on sabbatical, and two honorary doctoral degrees had been conferred on him in the past few years.

As a young man, Rabbi Adler, now fifty-nine years old, had been a chaplain in the Pacific theater during World War II. Among other things, he was known in Detroit for his work in interfaith relations—this very service was being attended by a hundred and twenty-five visitors from various churches. He was also active in civic affairs: chairman of the United Auto Workers union's public review board, vice-president of the Community Health Association, member of the Governor's Committee for Higher Education, member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, and president of the Zionist Organization of Detroit.

"A rabbi practices the most unspecialized profession in the universe," he had said not long before, "but my association with the young people is, for me, the most satisfying part of my work."

Richard Wishnetsky, sitting quietly with a gun in his pocket, was in a position to know all of this. He had often talked to Rabbi Adler and during the year past had frequently sought his counsel. Rabbi Adler, in turn, was familiar with Richard's problems and had been trying to draw him away from the abyss that threatened to engulf him.

RABBI ADLER finished his sermon at approximately 11:40 A.M. and returned to his seat on the *bimah** next to thirteen-year-old Steven Frank, whose bar mitzvah had been celebrated during the service. As a cantor began to chant the Kaddish, Richard moved calmly but swiftly to the front of the *bimah*, raised his gun and fired a bullet into the high, vaulted ceiling of the Sanctuary. A moment of stunned silence followed. Then Richard shouted to the two cantors, the president of the congregation, and the Frank boy, all of whom were on the *bimah*, "In your seats! Off the *bimah*!" They hesitated but then obeyed when Rabbi Adler said, "You had better do what he says. This boy is sick."

Richard climbed the steps to the pulpit at the center of the *bimah* and turned to face the congregation of over seven-hundred people, including his father, mother, and sister. The rabbi remained in his seat, about fifteen feet away. Richard placed his gun on the pulpit, unfolded a piece of paper, grabbed the microphone, and began to read a statement. A tape recorder, used to record the rabbi's sermon, continued to turn, thus capturing the speech and sounds of what followed.

"This congregation," Richard read in a clear and self-possessed voice, "is a travesty and an abomination. It has made a mockery by its phoniness and hypocrisy of the beauty and spirit of Judaism. It is composed of people. . . ." He stopped as he noticed a member of the congregation moving toward him. "Off!" he shouted. The rabbi motioned the man away. "Go back down," he said quietly. "I know this boy."

"It is composed of people," continued Richard, "who on the whole make me ashamed to say that I am a Jew. For the most part. . . ." Here his audience began to stir and he said firmly, "Everybody quiet. It is composed of men, women and children who care for nothing except their vain, egotistical selves. With this act I protest a humanly horrifying and hence unacceptable situation."

Richard turned to his right, revolver in hand, to face Rabbi Adler. In a soft, almost tender voice, he said, "Rabbi . . ." and then shot the seated man in the left forearm. Amid wild screams from the audience, the rabbi rose and Richard took a few steps toward him. At almost point-blank range Richard fired again. This time the bullet pierced the rabbi's yarmulke and entered the left side of his head behind the ear. As the screaming from

* The platform from which services are conducted.

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the audience reached a wild intensity, Rabbi Adler fell heavily to the floor. Richard now placed the gun barrel against his own head and fired a shot through his brain. He reeled and stumbled backward for seven or eight feet, then fell on his back.

The two men, the rabbi and his young assailant, were rushed to immediate surgery in separate hospitals nearby. After lingering in life for nearly five more days, Richard Wishnetsky died early in the morning on Wednesday, February 16, 1966. He was buried that same afternoon, following a private service. The eulogy was spoken by Rabbi Irwin Groner, an assistant at Shaarey Zedek, who said: "How could these qualities and tendencies reside within one human spirit? Love and hate! Intelligence and madness! The search for clarity and the acceptance of fantasy! 'The heart's devious—who can know it?' "

IN THE ambulance which took him from Shaarey Zedek to the hospital, Rabbi Adler gained consciousness from time to time, asking for his wife. At the hospital it was discovered that the bullet, rather than penetrating the skull, had flattened against it, sending minute bone fragments into vital areas of the brain. A team of prominent surgeons performed two operations, after which Rabbi Adler was placed in an intensive-care ward. The doctors explained that they could do nothing further.

The rabbi remained in the ward for more than three weeks, without regaining consciousness. His wife was almost constantly at his side. She had been one of the first to reach her fallen husband on the *bimah*, and one of the first to console the horror-stricken Wishnetsky family.

Prayers were offered for Rabbi Adler in churches throughout the country, and messages of sympathy poured in from all over the world. Rabbi Morris Adler died early in the morning on March 11, 1966, and was buried two days later. Over six-thousand people attended the funeral, described as the largest in the history of Detroit.

Earlier, a note had been discovered, written by Richard before the fatal day; in it he spoke of what he was planning to do as though it had already been accomplished:

"My distorted, disoriented voice, either barely uttered or tremendously violent, gives you a slight horrifying glimpse into the dehumanized future that awaits you and your unfortunate children, who will be healthy, comfortable and secure beyond your fondest dreams and just as diseased. Since I feel that I am no longer able to make any significant creative contributions I shall make a destructive one. What happened in Shaarey Zedek happens only once in a lifetime. . . . Suffer in your frozen hells of apathy, boil in the self-hate of outraged impotence. Listen to my voice, you deaf ones. Listen to how sick, sad, lonely and forlorn it is."

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GEORGE KATEB

KENNEDY AS STATESMAN

THE DREAM of the political outsider is to know why men of state are doing what they do. There are, of course, some resources available to the diligent student: he can rely on the New York *Times* for an accumulation of indispensable detail, he can infer motive on the basis of a general theory of political behavior, he can immerse himself in the reading of history for the sake of plucking rough analogies from the inexhaustible record of the crimes and follies of mankind. But a nagging sense of insufficiency is always there. Detail, inference, analogy do not quite add up to the real thing. How can the student be sure that he is not catching at shadows, that he is not lost in the maze of his own imaginings, that he does not see a plot where there is only confusion or an impulse where there is in fact calculation? To be sure, his occupational hazard is paranoid suspicion, dirty-mindedness, motive-mongering; and his self-administered therapy is to take refuge in the epilogues to *War and Peace*, or in a desperate skepticism, or finally in an acceptance of things at face value. The lust to know what really is happening, however, cannot be checked. The voices of consolation or derision will inevitably be drowned out. The truth must be pursued. He will cling to the belief—perhaps it is a delusion—that secrecy is the one great obstacle between him and his goal, which is to perceive the time in which he lives.

So it is with enormous expectations that one opens the pages of the two recent books on John F. Kennedy by Theodore Sorensen* and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.† Obviously, the whole truth will not be contained in them. Allowance must be made for tact and for national security. No single chronicler can have at his disposal more than a small amount of the raw ingredients of countless Presidential and bureaucratic decisions. For all that, both Sorensen and Schlesinger were close to the center; both would want to fill in the picture; Schlesinger especially could be expected to befriend the academic inquirer by letting him in on the daily actuality of the Kennedy administration. The events covered are not yet cold: we are now locked in their ramifications. Surely the intimate truth about the years 1961-1963 will make the immediate present more intelligible?

Neither book disappoints; each deepens our understanding of the Kennedy years. It would not be correct to say that any startling revelations are made; it may even be that a few vain readers will come away from these books (especially Sorensen's) with the feeling that there is nothing at all new in them, and that what the *Times* and a few journals had not already reported and disclosed, political shrewdness could supply. So be it. The fact remains that, at the very least, *Kennedy* and *A Thousand Days* put a great many things together, and by their very inclusiveness, permit a more definite sense of the recent past to emerge.

Truly, the sense that emerges is not the sense intended. The aim of both writers is naturally to praise—not indiscriminately, but for one main trait: newness. In the eyes of Sorensen and Schlesinger, Kennedy stood for a break with the past, and a break that was all to the good. He injected vitality into a stagnant nation, while striving to direct that vitality away from cold-war bellicosity, toward the deepest problems of the age, toward hunger, backwardness, and the craving for peace. Who can doubt that if it were only a question of Kennedy's abstract intention, this description of him would be perfectly accurate? What is so awful is that in case after case, as these two narratives (in spite of themselves) make clear, Kennedy's abstract intention gave way before pressures of one sort or another. Even more, Kennedy's initiative, in the absence of immediate pressures, was sometimes in direct contradiction to his abstract intention. To put the matter briefly: the break that Kennedy effected with the past resulted in an intensification of cold-war bellicosity, not in its lessening. Sometimes he acted deliberately; sometimes he acted as he did because he thought he could not act in any other way. The tendency of his actions, however, was to change the direction of Eisenhower's policy, and prepare the way for Johnson's activism. A good part of the story is found in these two books.

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*Kennedy, Harper and Row, 758 pp., $10.00.

†*A Thousand Days*, Houghton-Mifflin, 1087 pp., $9.00.

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The story begins with the adoption of the so-called "McNamara strategy." This was a deliberate act of policy on the part of the Kennedy administration; a free choice, so to speak. It is certain that if Rockefeller had been President, the same strategy would have been adopted.* It is probable that if Nixon had been elected, he would have moved in the same direction as Kennedy. It is likely that only Stevenson, among the leading Democrats, would at least have tried, as President, to resist the adoption of the "McNamara strategy." Among the Republicans it had been, in fact, none other than Eisenhower who prevented its earlier acceptance, thereby causing the resignations of Ridgway, Gavin, and Maxwell Taylor. Which is to say that Kennedy's position represented no new departure in principle, but rather was faithful to widespread assumptions—assumptions shared by men wanting a more vigorous and extended American involvement in the struggle against Communism. From the very start of his administration, then, Kennedy was determined to make American capacities more powerful because more refined, even though he sincerely believed, and had believed for a long time, that the affairs of the world perhaps needed an altogether different approach.

The McNamara strategy was meant to repeal the principal military theory of the Eisenhower administration, the doctrine of massive retaliation. Under this doctrine, the Soviet Union was to be held directly responsible for any Leninist coup or insurrection anywhere in the world, and would stand to suffer an overwhelming nuclear attack as punishment for its imputed responsibility. Furthermore, the response to any Soviet conventional military move would also be an overwhelming nuclear attack. The doctrine needs only to be stated to be convicted of monstrous absurdity; but there were doubtless numerous officials who accepted it in its full absurdity. It is impossible, however, to believe that either Eisenhower or Dulles ever took their own theory literally. It may even be possible to believe that by talking about massive retaliation, Eisenhower was indirectly saying two things. First, American opposition to coups and insurrections would have to take essentially non-military forms, like bribery, good works, economic pressure, and backstage conspiracy. Second, the old cold war was over, and no overt Russian military move was foreseen. In any case, the development of American anti-guerrilla forces and, more important, the buildup of conventional forces, in the name of open American engagement, were ruled out. The costs were prohibitive; the effort provocative; the consequences treacherously uncertain. Schlesinger says half in humor, "Eisenhower could never find the use of local aggression to which nuclear warfare seemed a sensible response." But the joke is now on Schlesinger.

Kennedy initiated the abandonment of that policy. He embraced, as Schlesinger neatly puts it, ". . . the strong view taken by the service whose mission, money and traditions were most threatened by the . . . doctrine [of massive retaliation] —the Army." In his first months, he added six billion dollars to the last Eisenhower military budget. A large fraction went to the nuclear deterrent: McNamara was, and is, a firm believer in something called "flexible response": nuclear weapons must be so diverse and sophisticated as to permit selectivity and gradation in their use. This is another phantom, and I need not chase it now. The important point is that great sums were allocated to the buildup of anti-guerrilla and conventional forces. Sorensen gives the rationale: ". . . if this country was to be able to confine a limited challenge to the local and non-nuclear level, without permitting a Communist victory—then it was necessary to build our own non-nuclear forces to the point where any aggressor would be confronted with the same poor choice Kennedy wanted to avoid: humiliation or escalation. A limited Communist conventional action, in short, could best be deterred by a capacity to respond effectively in kind." The only trouble with this rationale, in regard to Russia, is that the buildup of conventional forces was much more a provocation than a deterrence. Who could take seriously the possibility that Russia would invade Western Europe or the Near East—who except the army and its intellectuals? What was there to deter? The trouble with this rationale, in regard to revolutionary movements, is that the inability of conventional and anti-guerrilla forces to deter would soon become apparent, and America would be tempted to use its strength to destroy what it could not deter. The counterrevolutionary career would be launched in earnest, with no end in sight. A task more huge, more hopeless, could not be conceived. The view of Communism as a monolithic force was retained from the old theory of massive retaliation; but now the ambition of meeting it in all its forms became entirely serious. Containment became a universal and undiscriminating principle of foreign policy. The threats to American security were seen as infinite.

KENNEDY'S vision of the world comes out most clearly in his conversations with Khrushchev at Vienna in June 1961. Schlesinger's report is fuller than Sorensen's, though Sorensen's is also quite valuable. Tension over Berlin, the Laotian crisis, and the Bay of Pigs episode were the background to the conference. But the great theme

*Sorensen says that in mid-1961, when McNamara's views were assuming final shape, Kennedy thought that Rockefeller was the most likely Republican opponent in 1964. "Nor was [Kennedy] unmindful of the fact that . . . Rockefeller . . . was criticizing the administration's complacency on civil defense in much the same terms Kennedy had applied to the 'missile gap' in earlier years."

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was the balance of power throughout the world, and the relation of "wars of national liberation" to that balance. Delicately but insistently, Kennedy tried to get Khrushchev to see the world as he saw it. War between the two great powers was out of the question; the use of nuclear weapons was too terrible to contemplate. But each great power had vital interests which had to be respected; let there be no miscalculation concerning the determination of either side to protect its vital interests. The effort to impose Communism by force of arms in any country would obviously imperil the balance of power in the world. The United States and the Soviet Union would compete peacefully, and allow the uncommitted world to choose freely its way of life.

Obviously, Khrushchev did not accept the responsibility that Kennedy seemed to wish to thrust on him. Sorensen paraphrases his reply: "Was the President saying that Communism should exist only in Communist countries, that its development elsewhere would be regarded by the U.S. as a hostile act by the Soviet Union? The United States wants the U.S.S.R., he said, to sit like a schoolboy with hands on the table, but there is no immunization against ideas. . . . [Khrushchev] returned time and again to the thesis that the Soviet Union could not be held responsible for every spontaneous uprising or Communist trend. . . . Castro was not a Communist but U.S. policy could make him one. . . ."

It is apparent from the reports that Khrushchev alternated between two responses. Either the Soviet Union could not be held responsible for the surge of revolutionary discontent throughout the world, or the Soviet Union could not be expected to withhold aid, when asked, to insurgent movements and new regimes. It is hard to see what else Khrushchev could have said: he was, in effect, describing the role of the Soviet Union in world affairs analogously to that of the United States. He nowhere said that the Soviet Union would export revolution in the old Trotskyist sense: not by Soviet arms, or by Soviet instigation in an otherwise tranquil situation. That there would be uncontrolled revolutionary movements could not be denied; but Soviet responsibility could not possibly extend to them.

Kennedy's words at Vienna, and the policies he followed, show that he accepted the view that all insurgencies in which Communists take part are inspired by and directed from Moscow. In turn, the triumph of any such insurgency represents a shift in the balance of power between the great power-blocs, a defeat for the West, a serious impairment of its security. As Sorensen says, "The extent of U.S. commitment and of Communist power involvement differed from one to the other, but the dilemma facing John Kennedy in each one was essentially the same: how to disengage the Russians from the 'liberation' movement and prevent a Communist military conquest without precipitating a major Soviet-American military confrontation." The way out of the seeming dilemma was to increase the American anti-guerrilla and conventional capacity.

Sooner or later that capacity would be used. Political moves are determined by the means on hand as much as by anything else: men do all they can. One would like to praise Kennedy unreservedly for apparently limiting American military involvement in the Laotian crisis of 1961-62 to dramatic but empty gestures, despite intense pressure put on him by his military advisers to land American troops in Laos. (Sorensen says his "posture . . . combined bluff with real determination in proportions he made known to *no one*. . . .) But the praise must be qualified. First, Kennedy was strongly inclined to intervene: he saw the Laotian crisis as a manifestation of the world Communist conspiracy rather than as the product of local antagonisms, in which local Communists played a part; and he thought that a Communist victory in Laos would imperil the security of the United States and its major allies.* Second, the reason for staying out of Laos was, in part, the Bay of Pigs affair. " 'Thank God the Bay of Pigs happened when it did,' he would say to me [Sorensen] in September. . . . 'Otherwise we'd be in Laos by now—and that would be a hundred times worse.' " Kennedy told Schlesinger the same thing. It took one fiasco to prevent another. As it turned out, the Pathet Lao stopped short of total victory: Khrushchev, appalled at the prospect of American military intervention, managed to police an insurgency he had no part in starting and little part in sustaining. By acting as he did, Khrushchev must have lent credibility to the view that all insurgencies were his to turn on and off. The nature of his act was not seen for what it was.

The stage was set for a reversal of Eisenhower's policy in Vietnam. In May 1961, Vice-President Johnson reported to Kennedy, according to Schlesinger, ". . . the basic decision in Southeast Asia is here. We must decide whether to help these countries to the best of our ability or throw in the towel in the area and pull back our defenses to San Francisco and a 'Fortress America' concept." In October, General Maxwell Taylor made a three-week visit to Vietnam and urged positive action on Kennedy. Once again, Kennedy was induced to see a local struggle as an element in a greater struggle. Schlesinger says, ". . . given the truculence of Moscow, the Berlin crisis and the resumption of nuclear testing, the President unquestionably felt that an American retreat in Asia might upset the whole world balance." Sor-

*There was also a political consideration. Schlesinger says, "Kennedy told Rostow that Eisenhower could stand the political consequences of Dien Bien Phu and the expulsion of the West from Vietnam in 1954 because the blame fell on the French; 'I can't take a 1954 defeat today.' "

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ensen says, "What was needed, Kennedy agreed with his advisers, was a major counterinsurgency effort—the first ever mounted by this country. . . . Formally, Kennedy never made a final negative decision on troops. In typical Kennedy fashion, he made it difficult for any of the pro-intervention advocates to charge him privately with weakness." Gradually, almost insensibly, the American commitment grew and became irreversible. This is not to say that Kennedy would necessarily have permitted the expansion of American force which Johnson has permitted. It is impossible to speculate; one must simply acknowledge that by the end of 1963 "only" 15,500 American soldiers were in Vietnam. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine Johnson's commitment having been made without Kennedy's prior one, and without the wholehearted support Kennedy gave to the development of American non-nuclear capability—to the McNamara strategy. When anti-guerrilla activity fails (as it must in conditions like those in Vietnam), a next step can be taken. There will be many to say that it must be taken. Guerrilla warfare will be changed into conventional warfare, so that American technical superiority can be brought into play.

THE IDEA that the power of the West and the Communist bloc were in a balance that required constant vigilance to be preserved drove Kennedy not only to look on insurgencies as suitable for American military involvement, but also led him to invest every direct Soviet-American problem with a high degree of passion. The passion was of a special sort: an intense desire to avoid giving the impression of weakness. Let it be noted that this desire is not the same as the desire to give the impression of overbearing strength. No one could ever accuse Kennedy of enjoying the role of bully. The matter is more sad, more complicated. In his early book, *Why England Slept*, he expressed the belief that democracies were inherently pacific and self-absorbed, and that they had to have "shocks" to keep them alert to the dangers surrounding them. Being alert, they would not give the appearance of weakness; they would thereby dissuade aggressors from rashness. In line with this aim, Kennedy wanted to raise taxes in 1961 in order to enhance a sense of sacrifice and impress on Americans the gravity of world affairs. His ill-considered support of fallout shelters was part of the same purpose. More than that, all one can briefly say is that Kennedy seems to have had a naturally agonistic conception of world politics. He did not look for fights; rather he thought that they were inevitable, that crisis was the normality of international relations, even in the nuclear age. (He shocked Stevenson by referring to disarmament proposals as "propaganda.") Beyond the conflict of aims that always exists between nations, Kennedy saw a contest of wills, an almost formal antagonism in which the prize was pride at least as much as any substantive outcome. In discussing Dean Acheson's advice during the Berlin crisis of 1961, Schlesinger says, "[Khrushchev's] object, as Acheson saw it, was not to rectify a local situation but to test the general American will to resist; his hope was that, by making us back down on a sacred commitment, he could shatter our world power and influence. This was a simple conflict of wills, and, until it was resolved, any effort to negotiate the Berlin issue per se would be fatal. . . . For Acheson the test of will seemed almost an end in itself rather than a means to a political end." Schlesinger and Sorensen both make it clear that the tone of Kennedy's military advisers was practically identical to Acheson's. What is so troubling is that Kennedy's reasons for policy, on numerous occasions, were similar. They prominently included the wish to appear to be accepting a challenge. He was inclined to define the world as the "realists" defined it, though possessed of a self-doubt and a magnanimity foreign to them. Fortunately, one could probably say that the United States under Kennedy never yielded in a contest of wills, was never bested. But the precedents perhaps established, the opportunities perhaps missed, are not easily dismissed.

It would be heavy-handed to make much of the Bay of Pigs affair. Kennedy regretted the failure; he may even have regretted the effort. (The one time Sorensen raises his voice in censure of Kennedy is when he is reporting this event.) But the analysis made by Sorensen of Kennedy's mood before he allowed the expedition to get under way is fairly depressing: "He did not regard Castro as a direct threat to the United States, but neither did he see why he should 'protect' Castro from Cubans embittered by the fact that their revolution had been sold out to the Communists. Cancellation of the plan at that stage, he feared, would be interpreted as an admission that Castro ruled with popular support and would be around to harass Latin America for many years to come. His campaign pledges to aid anti-Castro rebels had not forced his hand, as some suspected, but he did feel that his disapproval of the plan would be a show of weakness inconsistent with his general stance." Anxiety was piled on anxiety, but the sharpest of them all was the fear of having himself or his country thought weak. Appearances were accorded great weight; the United States was constantly having to prove itself. But why? Who was in a position to put this country on trial, who doubted its resolve, who was ignorant of its strength, who, indeed, was not terrified of its strength (the Soviet Union and China included)?

Again, in the case of the Berlin crisis in 1961, the same anxieties are disclosed. After a while, it becomes hard to keep on worrying about Berlin; any problem loses some of its reality through continuous exposure. One does not mean to be cal-

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lous; but is a mutually satisfactory settlement out of the reach of human wit? Or is the problem useful to all parties as a source of manipulable tension? Before the U-2 incident, it seemed as if Eisenhower and Khrushchev were about to reach some accord. No accord, of course, was reached. Kennedy inherited Khrushchev's dissatisfaction, and the rigid incompetence of the imbecile East German regime. Schlesinger informs us that Kennedy "used to wonder later what had gone wrong in the spring of 1961. He thought at times that the March and May messages calling for an increased American defense effort might have sounded too threatening." The intended deterrence to crisis had helped bring one about. What, now, to do? Kennedy's advisers, led by Acheson, as we have already seen, refused to countenance any negotiations: the possibility that Khrushchev had perhaps a troublesome situation on his hands was not granted. The exact status-quo had to be maintained; some alternative to staying put on the old terms or getting out in a humiliating way was disregarded. Kennedy was determined, Sorensen says, ". . . to make [the Berlin crisis] not only a question of West Berlin's rights—on which U.S., British, French, and West German policies were not always in accord*—but a question of direct Soviet-American confrontation over a shift in the balance of power." The bondage to the cold war could not be relinquished. The result was, once more, dramatic gesture: ". . . draft calls were doubled, tripled, enlistments were extended and the Congress promptly and unanimously authorized the mobilization of up to 250,000 men. . . ." The Wall was built, the crisis faded. Only the people of East Berlin had lost, securely imprisoned as they were now to become. It will not do to place, as Sorensen does, the full responsibility for the stiffness of American policy on the inertia or philo-Germanism of the State Department. Kennedy had other sources of opinion—for example, Sorensen and Schlesinger. In reflecting on the crisis, Sorensen cannot forbear from remarking, ". . . no one knew when either side, convinced that the other would back down, might precipitate a situation from which neither could back down." Only flexibility, only an avoidance of seeing one's total position implicated in every situation, only a willingness to give up the ideology of confrontation, could help to insure that intolerable situations would not emerge. The Berlin crisis uselessly impaired Soviet-American relations, and prevented (temporarily, to be sure) certain kinds of cooperation with the Soviets.

THE American decision of March 1962 to resume atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons is yet another example of the politics of appearances. Russia had itself resumed testing in September 1961, and had made, Sorensen says, "important weapons progress." That is, at the time they resumed, they must have felt that the nuclear buildup implemented by McNamara had weakened their security; the arms race had taken another leap forward. As both Sorensen and Schlesinger make clear, Kennedy's decision to resume derived primarily from considerations having little to do with American military needs. Sorensen says, "Nearly all the principal advisers involved favored resuming atmospheric tests (though a few days before the tests began, McNamara startled Rusk and Bundy at lunch by suggesting that they were not really necessary)." Schlesinger says, "Jerome Wiesner maintained in December that it remained basically a political question: 'While these tests would certainly contribute to our military strength, they are not critical or even very important to our over-all military posture.'" Schlesinger indicates that Kennedy agreed more or less. Sorensen says that Kennedy ". . . still had doubts about the value of his test series (although not about the necessity of his decision). . . . Privately he speculated that fears of Soviet nuclear test progress might have been akin to previous fears of a Soviet 'bomber gap' and 'missile gap.' . . ." But still the order to resume was given. In reply to Harold Macmillan's impassioned plea to avoid resumption, Kennedy said (in Sorensen's paraphrase) that the Soviets ". . . would be more likely to attribute such a decision to weakness rather than goodwill. . . ." To Adlai Stevenson, he was equally emphatic: "What choice did we have? . . . [Khrushchev] has had a succession of apparent victories—space, Cuba, [the Berlin Wall]. . . . He wants to give out the feeling that he has us on the run. . . ." Feeling challenged, fearing to be thought fearful, Kennedy decided to do what he hated to do, and had little faith in. He could not escape the tyranny of appearances.

The Cuban missile crisis, the greatest of all crises in the Kennedy years, also contained this same obsession. Kennedy's most desperate anguish came at a moment when he felt that appearances were not to be endured; his most stunning victory came at a moment when he succeeded in altering appearances. It would be foolish to reduce the crisis to this single element of appearances; but to ignore its possibly *preponderant* role would also be foolish.

In a wonderfully lucid exposition, Sorensen describes the several theories suggested by the President's advisers to explain Khrushchev's move. (One of the most fascinating small aspects of this affair was the response of the Chinese, who accused Khrushchev of "adventurism" in trying to place missiles in Cuba—and of cowardice for removing them.) The theories mentioned by Sorensen are (1) that Khrushchev was testing the will of the United States, and hoped to make the United States look weak, irresolute, and faith-

*How sly Sorensen sometimes is!—G.K.

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less to its sworn commitments; (2) that Khrushchev hoped to induce us to invade Cuba in order to disgrace us in the eyes of the world; (3) that Khrushchev was genuinely concerned for Cuba's security,* (4) that Khrushchev was bargaining, and hoped to trade off the Cuban bases for a Berlin settlement or American bases overseas; and (5) that Khrushchev was desirous of improving his strategic nuclear position. Sorensen says that Kennedy's own analysis ". . . regarded the third and fifth theories as offering likely but insufficient motives and he leaned most strongly to the first." That is, Kennedy interpreted the move as primarily an affront to the United States, a calculated probe of weakness, a contest of wills. He increasingly insisted to his advisers that the entire matter be defined as a Soviet-American confrontation. Irrespective of interpretation, however, Kennedy insisted that the missiles "would have to be removed by the Soviets in response to direct American action." In a television interview on December 16, 1962, to which Sorensen makes only a brief allusion, Kennedy gave a splendidly candid account of his reasons for taking any risk to prevail. He said, ". . . [the Russians] were planning in November to open to the world the fact that they had these missiles so close to the United States; not that they were intending to fire them, because if they were going to get into a nuclear struggle, they have their own missiles in the Soviet Union. But it would have politically changed the balance of power. It would have appeared to, and appearances contribute to reality."

Harold Macmillan could wonder "what all the fuss was about"; after all, Europe was used to living under the nuclear threat. He seems to have missed the point, namely that there was no military threat but instead a threat to America's reputation as a world power. Largely for the sake of great-power reputation (though other reasons, including the reputation of the Democratic party, figured), the world was brought close to a terrible event. (One assumes that this is so, but *The Penkovskiy Papers* say that Kennedy knew the Soviet nuclear capacity to be unready for action, and that Kennedy was therefore quite free to be as tough as he wanted and not incur grave risks.) Appearances do contribute to reality: reputation for power is a source of power: you are if they think you are. But was America's reputation so fragile? The irony is that America's very strength permitted Kennedy to act out of fear of being thought weak. Its very strength, however, should have permitted him to mitigate this fear. He did not carry his consciousness of American power far enough—as far as Eisenhower, before him, had carried it. And a relentless pursuit of right appearances can be catastrophic. In this instance, the pursuit was not catastrophic, but what guarantee was there? Kennedy later told Sorensen that "The odds that the Soviets would go all the way to war seemed to him then 'somewhere between one out of three and even.' " A nuclear war to eliminate a nuclear installation—can such thoughts be entertained?

The alternative was not mortified acceptance, but negotiation before the crisis escaped control. Stevenson, according to Schlesinger, proposed the removal of the missiles in exchange for a UN presence in Cuba, an American non-invasion guarantee, and relinquishment of the base at Guantanamo. This program struck Kennedy as premature, and some of his advisers ". . . felt strongly that the thought of negotiations at this point would be taken as an admission of the moral weakness of our case and the military weakness of our posture." The blockade was declared; unless Khrushchev backed down, ". . . the United States would have had no real choice but to take action against Cuba the next week." The implications of invasion were understood: Kennedy said that "If we had invaded Cuba . . . I am sure the Soviets would have acted. They would have to, just as we would have to. I think there are certain compulsions on any major power." Khrushchev did back down, and was freely granted a guarantee against the invasion of Cuba. But he did back down; he refused to breach the blockade; he agreed to withdraw the missiles. How is his decision to be assessed? Was it cowardice or was it sanity? Did he not also win a victory of sorts in the realm of appearances by emerging as a champion of rationality? As such, did not his reputation improve, and indirectly with it, the power of the Soviet Union?

REDEFINITION OF radical revolution as Muscovite conspiracy, redefinition of every problem as a great-power confrontation affecting the global balance of power, the adoption of the McNamara strategy in order to have the means to act on the basis of these redefinitions—can this be all that Kennedy bequeathed us in foreign policy? The answer is, of course, no. Who can repress nostalgia for those days in late 1962 and early 1963, when Kennedy, abetted by Pope John and Khrushchev, seemed to recapture the spirit of his inaugural address and of many of his earlier speeches? Surely this was the real Kennedy who, hitherto distracted from his mission and victimized by the foreign-policy establishment, had finally struggled free. The Cuban missile crisis may have petrified Khrushchev; it seems to have altered

*Sorensen says, "It should be noted that the Soviet Union stuck throughout to this position. Mikoyan claimed in a conversation with the President weeks after it was all over that the weapons were purely defensive, that they had been justified by threats of invasion voiced by Richard Nixon and Pentagon generals, and that the Soviets intended to inform the United States of these weapons immediately after the elections to prevent the matter from affecting the American political campaign." Sorensen acknowledges that the administration in 1962 had been ". . . readying a plan of military action in the knowledge that an internal revolt, a Berlin grab or some other action might someday require it. . . ."

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Kennedy. The very next morning after Khrushchev's capitulation, Kennedy told Schlesinger that ". . . he was afraid that people would conclude from this experience that all we had to do in dealing with the Russians was to be tough and they would collapse." After a shrewd analysis of the affair, he went on to say, "They were in the wrong and knew it. So, when we stood firm, they had to back down. But this doesn't mean at all that they would back down when they felt that they were in the right and had vital interests involved." But these words do not capture the full transformation. After the Cuban crisis, Schlesinger says, Kennedy's feelings ". . . underwent a qualitative change . . . a world in which nations threatened each other with nuclear weapons now seemed to him not just an irrational but an intolerable and impossible world." The proof of this sentiment came in the form of strenuous negotiation to produce the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The fact is that much of the strenuousness was spent on Kennedy's own military advisers. Once again, the passion for right appearances was exhibited by the Chiefs of Staff. Maxwell Taylor told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "the most serious reservations of the military had to do with the fear of a euphoria in the West which will eventually reduce our vigilance." Only this time Kennedy, after making some concessions to the military, rejected the logic of appearances and went ahead with the treaty.

The real victory that Kennedy won in Cuba was over his own advisers. Some would like to say that he had softened up Khrushchev: that a show of strength and determination, on such a scale and under such trying conditions, had so demoralized the Russian leader that he had no choice but to feign moderation and accept Kennedy's overtures of peace. It would be equally plausible to say that Kennedy's show of strength and determination had (for the time being) won him so much prestige and brought him so much self-confidence that he could at last prevail even over his bellicose aides, and pursue a policy that he (and Khrushchev) wanted from the beginning. Not out of a good heart, but out of cold prudence, out of dread of American power, Khrushchev had been straining to be compliant. Success in Cuba accidentally made it possible for Kennedy to take advantage of Khrushchev's wishes. Kennedy's sense of reality shone through. If he had lived, would he have imposed that sense on the men around him? One wants to believe that he would.

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The Apocalyptic Temper

ROBERT ALTER

We must get it out of our head that this is a doomed time, that we are waiting for the end, and the rest of it. . . . Things are grim enough without these shivery games. . . . We love apocalypses too much.

—Saul Bellow, *Herzog*

As a rule, defining literary works in terms of timeless archetypes and looming cultural traditions turns out to be a pretty arid business. All it takes, after all, is a little learning, a little ingenuity, and the solemn determination to make a "discovery." Since our universities are increasingly filled with people who possess all these attributes, the hunt-and-peck system of archetyping has become, in the literal as well as the proverbial sense, mainly an academic exercise. But there are plainly times when the act of aligning a contemporary work with some broad configuration of the literary past can produce a clearer perspective in which to see the imaginative outlines of the work under consideration, the past explicating the present as the present adds its gloss on the past. For, despite the notion now so much in vogue of a dramatic break between our age and preceding ones, we bear with us, in ways we don't always realize, the spiritual freight of the past, sometimes staggering under that burden down blind alleys we might otherwise have avoided.

This kind of relevance of cultural past to cultural present was brought home to me with particular force by R. W. B. Lewis's recent essay on an apocalyptic mode of American fiction, "Days of Wrath and Laughter."* Although Lewis's purpose is to offer a careful description of a literary phenomenon, not really to evaluate it, his account of the apocalyptic strain in American writing had the effect for me of throwing into focus a vague sense I have had of an underlying inadequacy in much of our fiction and thinking over the last few years. Now, "apocalypse" is one of those words that has seemed so strikingly appropriate for the major literature—and, of course, the history—of the past fifty years that it is more often sonorously invoked than simply used. Lewis reminds us that it is also the name of a book in the New Testament and argues that if the apocalyptic vision of our writers is partly inspired by the nightmare of modern history, it is as well a very particular kind of dark dream passed down from the ancient world by religious and literary tradition. What he tries to do in "Days of Wrath and Laughter," for the most part quite persuasively, is to make "apocalyptic" work as a useful term of literary classification by showing how the specific content associated with that word by Christian tradition has been utilized, reworked, transformed, to constitute a distinctive sub-genre of American fiction.

American culture, Lewis points out, has had a powerful apocalyptic tendency from the days of its Puritan founders. In the earliest stage, the apocalypse was more typically imagined as millennial than cataclysmic; though this is hardly the way the word is now used, Christianity does give warrant for brighter views of the promised end—the Book of Revelations, we recall, includes a vision of the Millennium and the New Jerusalem to follow as well as the Seven Trumpets of Woe and the Beast from the Abyss. By the middle of the 19th century, the millennial gleam had altogether faded in the minds of many serious American writers, leaving only a brooding sense of the terrible imminence of the End. It is at this point that Melville, in *The Confidence-Man,* creates a distinctive American version of the apocalyptic myth: the imagined end of all things is in this elaborately ironic presentation ludicrous as well as disturbing; the novelist alludes to it as he brings all the people of his world into a state in which their pathetic absurdities are utterly exposed. *The Confidence-Man* thus initiates in American fiction a tradition of what Lewis calls "savagely comical apocalypse": a line runs from Melville's steamboat of damned fools through Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* to Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust,* finally splaying out in a variety of novels of the 50's and 60's—Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man,* John Barth's *The Sot-Weed Factor,* Joseph Heller's *Catch-22,* Thomas Pynchon's *V.*

One might characterize the mode of fiction common to these novels—though this is not a term Lewis uses—as a picaresque version of the apocalypse. Our civilization is seen by these writers as such a "colossal humbug," in Mark

*The concluding essay in Lewis's new volume, *Trials of the Word,* Yale University Press, 259 pp., $6.50.

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Twain's words, that it deserves to go to pieces, but not in the dignity of a grand smash: as the protagonist of *The Mysterious Stranger* goes on to say, "Only laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast." Most of these novels work out some central action which is an updated variation on the scene from Revelations of the last loosing of Satan. Appropriately enough for a world that is no more than a stupendous fraud, the Prince of Lies appears as a picaresque role-player, a free-wheeling artist of disguise and deception whose intelligence, agility, and freedom from self-delusion may frequently elicit downright sympathy for his role as catalyst in the dissolution of a rotten existence. Melville's Confidence-Man, with his constantly changing masks, reappears in a variety of bizarrely protean figures in recent novels: Ellison's Rinehart, the Harlem preacher and pitchman of many faces; Barth's ubiquitous guide, Burlingame, expert of worldly knowledge and carnal corruption; Pynchon's mysterious lady of shifting identities, V., who is associated by Lewis with "the dark lady of the apocalypse, the Whore of Babylon." (Though Pynchon could hardly have been familiar with it, an equally apposite apocalyptic motif for *V.*'s world of people usurped by things is found in the legend of Armilus, the "Antichrist" of medieval Jewish apocalypse, who is the stonyhearted spawn of intercourse between Satan and the Roman statue of a beautiful woman.)

VIRTUALLY ALL the books that fit this pattern have, I would say, a special kind of coldly glittering appeal to the imagination. Their sharp-edged laughter gives the appearance of cutting to the core of our culture's moral abscesses and so communicates a sense of pain inflicted to work a cure. At the same time, the picaresque exuberance of the comedy offers a welcome release for our deepest feelings of anxiety about the mad state of things in which we live: the play of inventive energy of many of these novels imparts a kind of desperate exhilaration, an excited feeling that this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a caper. (My generalizations, of course, will not fit all the books in Lewis's grouping equally well. *Invisible Man,* despite major points of intersection with the comic-apocalyptic group, is in some ways a different kind of novel, finally more serious, I think, than the others mentioned.) All the writers, in sum, who account for the modern world through a harshly comic eschatology—and that description readily applies not only to novelists but to many contemporary poets and critics as well—would seem to fulfill ideally the characteristically modern notion of the function of art, to tell the terrible truth boldly, with intellectual verve.

What I would like to suggest is that, quite to the contrary, much recent American literature has told considerably less than the truth precisely because of the apocalyptic postures it has assumed. The excitement of apocalypses is seductive and may easily give the impression of profundity and imaginative daring where neither is present. No one can be altogether impervious to the jeweled flashes and lurid flames that illuminate those doomed landscapes of the Book of Revelations, but there is no other document in either the Old or New Testament so inhuman, so spiritually irresponsible, and the same negative attributes adhere to the modes of imagination that ultimately derive from Revelations.

It is a historical commonplace that Christianity was born out of the apocalyptic side of Judaism, but I think it is important to add that apocalypse is itself a decadent form of Judaism. Lewis, in the course of his argument, refers several times to an essay by Buber, "Prophecy, Apocalyptic, and the Historical Hour,"* but he does not make plain the fact that Buber's essay is a powerful exposure of the spiritual and moral weaknesses inherent in the apocalyptic imagination. The fundamental difference between prophecy and apocalypse, as Buber describes it, is between courageous engagement in even the most threatening history, on the one hand, and a total withdrawal, on the other hand, from a history that has become unbearable. The prophets of the Hebrew Bible, Buber reminds us, were not oracles; they evoked the future as vividly as possible because they believed that human actions could determine what the future would be, and they wanted desperately to affect their auditors' actions.

> The task of the genuine prophet was not to predict but to confront man with the alternatives of decision. . . . The prophetic faith involves the faith in the *factual* character of human existence, as existence that factually meets transcendance. Prophecy has in its way declared that the unique being, man, is created to be a center of surprise in creation.

By contrast, apocalyptic writers, ancient and modern, are not really interested in the facts of history or human nature because they scarcely believe any more in either—or, to put it another way, because what they assume to be the essential facts of human existence are wholly known, and can be summed up in a brief sentence like "We are all marked with the sign of the Beast, and the End is near." Apocalypse, which means "uncovering" in Greek, is a perfectly appropriate name for this kind of literature because there are no genuine, human surprises in it, only a breaking open of seals, tearing away of masks, lifting of veils—nothing but "revelations" of what is already known. As Buber aptly puts it, "Everything here is predetermined, all human decisions are only sham struggles. The future does not come to pass;

*Available in English in the paperback selection, *Pointing the Way*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, Harper Torchbooks.

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the future is already present. . . . Therefore it can be 'disclosed.' " Such disclosures may be impressive, but what we can *learn* from them about the complicated facts of our lives is at best limited.

Let me illustrate the applicability of Buber's analysis of the classic apocalyptic vision to the secular literature of our own century. Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* (for the title, see Revelations 9:1-11) offers a memorable image of the dehumanized Average Man of modern society in the grotesque Iowan hotel clerk, Homer Simpson, a character at first merely pathetic but in the end suddenly destructive. In E. M. Forster's distinctly unapocalyptic *Howards End,* we have a roughly analogous representation of the new common man, hopelessly warped by modern culture, in the self-educated insurance clerk, Leonard Bast, "one of the thousands who have lost the life of the body and failed to reach the life of the spirit." What Homer Simpson makes us repeatedly aware of is his symbolic freakishness, the ineradicable mark of the Beast upon him. What Leonard Bast makes us aware of is the complex, knowing intelligence with which he is conceived and continually re-examined, re-presented. West isn't really interested in the facts about Homer because they are so simple and so known—Homer is merely the perfect product and paradigm of American society's insidious sterility, a man totally alienated from his own intelligence, his body, from the very experiences he undergoes. For Forster, on the other hand, all the facts about Leonard Bast are terribly important: we learn the particular ways in which society forms him and in which he misguidedly forms himself, and by observing this pitiful yet somehow likable creature we discover the ambiguities and self-deceptions in our own aspirations for "culture," our own liberal-intellectual attitudes toward the deprived classes. *The Day of the Locust* is a brilliant book, but its achievement is of a lesser order—finally, I think, because of the schematic imagination which its apocalyptic assumptions impose.

THERE IS no room for real people in apocalypses, for when a writer chooses to see men as huddled masses waiting to be thrown into sulphurous pits, he hardly needs to look at individual faces; and so it is not surprising that recent comic-apocalyptic novelists should fill their worlds with the rattling skeletons of satiric hypotheses in place of fully fleshed characters. The impersonality, however, of apocalyptic writing is merely a symptom of its fundamental deficiency, and I think Buber is right in placing central emphasis on a failure of nerve, a determination to opt out of the challenges, complexities, and threats of history: "Wherever man shudders before the menace of his own work and longs to flee from the radically demanding historical hour, there he finds himself near to the apocalyptic vision of a process that cannot be arrested." If this weakness, which Buber claims to be the core of apocalypse, would seem in some way contradicted by the uncompromising strength of apocalyptic indictments, both in the old visions and in the new savage comedy, it is well to keep in mind an intuition of D. H. Lawrence's about the spiritual tenor of the Book of Revelations: "The Apocalypse . . . is repellent because it resounds with the dangerous snarl of the *frustrated, suppressed* collective self, the frustrated power-spirit in man, vengeful." Lawrence, as usual, states the case at once profoundly and with polemic provocation. The vehemence bespoken by his italic emphasis is directed not only against the chapel-going folk of his Christian boyhood, but also against an impulse in his own residually Christian religious imagination which he struggled to overcome, and it is perhaps the presence of apocalyptic rage within himself that explains the sureness of his insight.

The instance of Lawrence suggests why this whole question has particular relevance to our own time and place. American culture may be in many ways secular and humanist—or perhaps post-humanist, as that most apocalyptic of critics, Leslie Fiedler, has recently argued—but it is decisively post-Christian in some of its important aspects. Whether a writer's ancestry is Christian or Jewish makes little difference, as the presence of West and Heller among our neo-apocalyptists should indicate: the imaginative modes which the American writer often, perhaps even typically, draws upon are deeply embedded in a Christian world-view, a Christian ethics and politics.

Apocalypse was of course a Jewish invention, but I suspect that even in its first great period of flourishing it was championed for the most part by Jews like John the Baptist who went out into the desert to eat locusts. Yet even if it may have commanded wide enthusiasm in that age of profound spiritual unrest, the fact is that the historical consensus of Judaism largely rejected it in favor of competing "translations" of the vision of man and history articulated by the prophets. Christianity, on the other hand, has never been able to free itself wholly or comfortably from the basically apocalyptic nature of its beginnings. As far as one can safely infer historical fact from the record in the Gospels, Jesus appears to have conceived himself as a kind of prophet but more essentially as an "apocalyptic messiah," in the pointed phrase of the late Yehezkel Kaufmann. A new kind of claimant to the throne of David, he brings, like the prophets, an ethical message, but, at least as prominently, he brings dire predictions of an imminent end of time, when, just as in Revelations, the chosen will shine like the sun while the mass of offenders, as Jesus repeatedly warns, "will be thrown into the blazing furnace, the place of wailing and gnashing of teeth." This is quite different from both the prophetic threats of national disaster and the prophetic "days to come" (*aḥarit hayamim,* usually translated with

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a most misleading eschatological implication as "the end of days") because man has no control over what will happen. He can only prepare himself—individually, not as part of a society made up of mutually responsible members—for the impending moment. In the prophets, God works through man in history, with the promise of bringing history to a fulfillment; in Jesus's teaching, God stands poised to lop off history, suddenly, in the night.

The contrast between what Judaism and Christianity did with the prophetic impulse is strikingly illustrated in the different meanings attached to the term "kingdom of heaven" by Jesus and the early rabbis. In Jesus's mouth, of course, the kingdom is eschatological, something that will come *upon* man. In rabbinic literature the phrase appears as part of the idiom *'ol malkhut shamayim,* literally, "the yoke of the kingdom [or kingship] of heaven." When a man accepts the obligations of the Law, both written and oral, he is said to take upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven. Law is thus grasped as the means to implement those grand prophetic visions of God's reigning in splendor on earth. The quality of the most ordinary man's life, then, the small and large acts that constitute his daily relationship with other men and with what is beyond men, have the power to make manifest God's sovereignty in this world. Nothing expresses more clearly Judaism's concern with "the factual character of human existence, as existence that factually meets transcendance" than the Jewish preoccupation with law. Although the analysis and expounding of the Law often became an intellectual game in its own right, losing touch with the initial religious impulse of the activity, its primary motive is nevertheless an urgent need to discover what the particular and varied meanings of revelation are as it impinges upon the realm of everyday experience. Perhaps this is one reason why Jewish law, despite extended contacts with the Greco-Roman world in its formative period, never developed an extensive vocabulary of abstractions. The language of the Talmud is remarkably concrete—I am tempted to say, almost novelistic in its focus on familiar particulars. There is no "party of the first part" and "party of the second part" but "Simon" and "Reuben"; one does not speak of "incurring liability for indemnification" or even of "creating a public hazard," but of the man who piles up his barrels so as to block a thoroughfare, or who leaves his pottery to dry on the roof in a place where prevailing winds blow.

This centrality of law, with its intricate involvement in the here-and-now, placed visions of the hereafter in a secondary role; this is one of the meanings of the traditional primacy of *Halakhah* over *Aggadah,* law over lore. Christianity, by contrast, having discarded the very principle of *Halakhah,* was left in the uneasy position of making *Aggadah* absolutely essential to its world-view and therefore dogmatically binding—as it was never to be in Judaism—upon its adherents. There is, moreover, a clear connection between Christianity's rejection of law and its expectations of an imminent apocalypse. When Paul, in one of his demonstrations of the dispensability of the old Law, says (Romans 13), "Love cannot wrong a neighbor; therefore the whole law is summed up in love," he immediately adds that the entire earthly life we have known will soon be over: "In all this remember how critical the moment is. It is time for you to wake out of sleep, for deliverance is nearer to us now than when first we believed. It is far on in the night; day is near." The famous rabbinic precedent for Paul's statement—Paul, of course, had been a student of Rabban Gamaliel and may even have had this earlier formulation in mind—is Hillel the Elder's answer to the gentile who challenged him to sum up the whole law while his questioner stood on one foot: "Whatever is repugnant to you, do not do to your fellow man." Hillel's restatement of the Deuteronomic injunction to love one's neighbor is, I would say, more realistic than Paul's, but the more important difference between them is in the three words Hillel adds to his maxim—*v'idakh zil gmar,* "go learn the rest." Basic principles are certainly worth stating, but if history is more than a dark night about to be broken by an apocalyptic dawn, one must face up to the endlessly complicated, humanly inevitable business of details; one must learn.

To move from the realm of *Halakhah* to that of *Aggadah,* we might note that Judaism's characteristic development of the prophetic vision was messianism, not apocalypse, for the difference between the two is instructive. This is not to say that messianism and apocalypse have no significant connection; as a matter of fact, a whole cycle of post-talmudic messianic legends is suffused with apocalyptic motifs that ultimately derive from the same late biblical and Hellenistic Hebrew sources as the Book of Revelations. Nevertheless, the two modes of vision are different in kind because of the attitudes they take toward history and man's role in it. "Messiah" was originally a political term, and however heavily it was later overlaid with eschatological splendors by Jewish tradition, it was never wholly cut off from its connections with a Davidic dynasty destined to be flesh-and-blood rulers over the land of Israel. According to one often-cited talmudic view, "The only difference between this world and the Messianic Era is our present subjugation to foreign powers" (*Berakhot,* 34b). A century after Jesus's appearance as an "apocalyptic messiah," Rabbi Akiba supported the messiahship of Bar Kokhba, whose claim to that title was asserted through political activism, open rebellion against Rome.

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As political alternatives came to seem less feasible, human participation in the great movement of redemption shifted more typically to the moral and spiritual life of the individual. This notion is perhaps most strikingly expressed at a later juncture in history in the kabbalistic doctrine that man hastens the redemption by gathering up in his acts and meditations the divine sparks scattered through our broken world. It is also a point stressed in many rabbinic legends, like the well-known tale of Rabbi Joshua Ben-Levi, who is sent by Elijah to the gates of Rome to speak to the Messiah. Ben-Levi finds the Messiah sitting among the poor of the city, binding and unbinding his wounds; he exchanges polite greetings with the tarrying deliverer, and then, in answer to his question, "When are you coming?" he hears a single word—"today." Puzzled, Ben-Levi returns to Elijah with the complaint that the Messiah has lied to him. "What he really said to you," Elijah explains, quoting a verse from Psalms to complete the enigmatic answer, "is, 'Today—if ye give heed to His voice'" (*Sanhedrin*, 98a).

The recurrent image of the afflicted Messiah sitting among the poor suggests something of the human warmth with which the Jewish folk imagination typically infused the messianic idea. Eschatology had a personal focus, not only in the figure of the Messiah, but also in his forerunner, Elijah, who was transformed in popular legend from the biblical man of righteous wrath to a beloved emissary of divine compassion. One awaits the apocalypse with an electric tremor of fear tinged with delight in destruction—the comic apocalyptists, of course, simply reverse these proportions. One awaits the Messiah with the joyful eagerness appropriate to the anticipation of a dear, human guest. Stories are told of pious Jews who would buy a new suit of clothes and lay it aside, never to wear, in order to have their holiday best ready to put on when the redeemer came. S. Y. Agnon, in a memorable account of his childhood in Galicia of the 1890's, recreates the way in which the figure of his absent father and the awaited redeemer fused in his mind, so that when he went to sleep in his father's big bed, he would try to keep one ear pricked, to be ready to leap up if the ram's horn of the Messiah should sound during the night. Though the idea of redemption does imply setting things right on a cosmic scale, it was generally imagined by Jewish folklore in vividly personal terms, and this saved it from the irresponsibility of apocalypses, in which the imagination tends to go skittering off into the upper reaches of the cosmos, there to view humanity abstractly, as swarms of odious insects, beetles, or locusts.

Now, the impress of such classic Jewish traditions on the modern Jewish literary imagination is, admittedly, for the most part negligible, especially in the case of writers not working in Yiddish or Hebrew. Where there is ignorance one can hardly expect influence, and even for many Israeli writers who have been exposed to the Hebrew source materials and some American writers who have culled them in translation from paperback anthologies, the classic Jewish views rarely rise from the paper-and-ink plane of book-learning to become a vital mode of imagining man and history and their interrelation. From time to time, though, one does run across a significant exception, and, as in other matters, the exceptions are more instructive than the rule, since they show how a past different from the accepted one of Western culture can be immensely relevant to the needs of the present. For one of the chief advantages of the anomalous presence of the Jews, deeply implicated yet sharply apart, in two millennia of Christian civilization, is that they could sustain a culture whose development was roughly parallel to the majority culture, yet dramatically different, thus tracing against the curve of Christian history a series of lived-out alternatives to it. I scarcely need to add that the cultural life of our own time, with its peculiar habit of digging itself into circular ruts of constantly narrowing radius, could often benefit from alternatives.

It seems to me, for instance, that there is an essential connection between the fact that *Herzog* is Saul Bellow's most Jewish novel, in language, allusion, narrative materials, and that it is his great dissent from the intellectual vogue of "wasteland ideologies" and apocalypses. (Quite to the point is the fact that *The Waste Land* itself, the paradigmatic modern poem, is pervasively Christian, not merely in the motifs it employs, but in the nature of its basic assumptions about the life of the spirit. To cite a central example—the symbolic use of death, the whole myth of death and rebirth, presupposes a radical disjuncture between a sinful nature in man and his capacity for redemption which is profoundly alien to Judaism.) *Herzog* is Bellow's most autobiographical novel and that is both a strength and a weakness. But what is more to our purpose is that it is his most personal novel as well, in the sense I have used the word to distinguish messianism from apocalypse. Herzog continually attempts to counterpose against the great, killing abstractions of modern intellectual life the concrete particulars—poignant, saddening, ludicrous, sordid—that constitute the individuality, the vividly recollected specialness, of one man's life. His expressed hope for human value in an infinite and indifferent universe reflects the common-sense commitment to the world of familiar experience that has informed both Jewish law and Jewish messianism:

> And the peculiar idea entered my (Jewish) mind that we'd see about this! My life would prove a different point altogether. Very tired of the modern form of historicism which sees in this civilization the defeat of the best hopes of Western

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religion and thought. . . . The question of ordinary human experience is the principal question of these modern centuries . . . the strength of a man's virtue or spiritual capacity measured by his ordinary life.

What Bellow has absorbed from the Montreal ghetto-milieu of his boyhood is a certain feel for experience, an imaginative tone, style, and viewpoint, but it is clear that he has not been touched by the impelling central myths of Jewish tradition, which more often than not had already dwindled into superstition and pious reflex in the immigrant generation from which he sprang. By contrast, Elie Wiesel, the remarkable writer who casts his novels in French, and his journalism in Yiddish and Hebrew, was brought up in a little town in Transylvania where, in the years before the war, a child could still be steeped in the lore of a reverent Judaism, fired by the passionate aspirations of Jewish mysticism; and his work testifies to the impressive sustaining power of the messianic vision. No one has more right to the apocalyptic viewpoint than someone who has gone through what Wiesel has. Auschwitz, after all, was and is a kind of end of the world for all of us—anyone who has read Wiesel's account of it in *Night* is likely to have the doomsday glare of its unspeakable ovens flickering somewhere in the back of his head for a lifetime. One of the extraordinary aspects of Wiesel's vision is that, even after directly experiencing this terrible turn of history, he refuses to look at the world in an apocalyptic light. Instead, each of his novels asks with agonized urgency how the Messiah could have so utterly failed his people, while at the end of the most recent book,* the protagonist comes through painful quest to an affirmation—marvelously resonant against the novel's accumulated experience—of a transformed messianism, one in which man will have to dare to assume the whole burden of redemption:

> Whether or not the Messiah comes doesn't matter; we'll manage without him. It is because it is too late that we are commanded to hope. We shall be honest and humble and strong, and then he will come, he will come every day, thousands of times every day. He will have no face, because he will have a thousand faces. The Messiah isn't one man . . . he's all men. As long as there are men there will be a Messiah. One day you'll sing, and he will sing in you.

The obvious difference between this messianic reconstruction of life after the war and the kind of savagely comical apocalypse in vogue in American fiction is that Wiesel's vision is founded on an act of faith and that of the comic-apocalyptic writers, on a complete failure of faith. It is commonly assumed that to avow a lack of faith is a sign of honesty, and this is obviously often the case. But to absolutize a lack of faith in man and history and project it into literature is, for an artist, an easy way out, an escape from the difficult responsibilities of his calling. Through a habit of nervous laughter over the world's going to pieces, we titillate ourselves and at the same time imperceptibly inure ourselves to the prospect, so that it may become just a little more likely. Conversely, by carefully attending to the bewildering human particularities of our world, with the assumption that they must and can be coped with, we may make it somewhat more likely that we can grab hold of history before it goes skidding off to that awaited End. We may all sometimes wonder whether the communicated word really has the power to help us change ourselves and our history. That it possesses such power has, in any case, always been Judaism's first implicit principle of faith after the belief in God, and it seems now as much as ever to be a principle of faith that is literally indispensable.

* *The Gates of the Forest*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 226 pp., $4.95.

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The Literature of American Government

OSCAR GASS

HENRY MICHEL addressed his great book, *The Idea of the State,* to ". . . sincere minds . . . who search to see clearly in their ideas on some matters that are difficult and moving."* One rightly looks for no other addressees.

To "see clearly" is perhaps an object of every effort of the understanding. But it is an unfounded conviction that, in political matters, those who see more clearly will be the more reconciled to one another. Perhaps the contrary.

In all societies, the clear in mind will observe cross-purposes as well as shared purposes. And, in non-traditional societies, they will perceive that even profoundly deliberated approvals and allegiances are commonly given to conflicting values as well as shared values.

Moreover, in proportion to vision, one inevitably comes to participate in Tocqueville's recognition that " . . . what one calls necessary institutions are often only institutions to which one is accustomed, and that in the matter of social structure the field of the possible is much wider than men who live in each society imagine." This recognition leavens, but it also disturbs.

Again, whoever sees clearly knows that, while some states do stand more largely than others on custom and consent, no state can be free of conflict and coercion. To see more clearly, in these matters, is not to discover a straight path to concord—not even always to find how to straighten a little such crooked paths as one inherits.

Political reflection is a hazardous, uncertain road to peace. We choose this road because peace is not the only social good because, also in public affairs, we wish to understand what we are doing; and because—so long as the wish to understand lives—there is no other way.

I do not find political studies greatly cumulative or progressive. (They seem to me cumulative in a degree perhaps comparable to studies of history—not like modern physics or biology.) If an intelligent American, who had hitherto found time to read only the newspapers, said to me that—to understand contemporary government better—he would like to read two books, I would probably recommend to him Aristotle's *Politics* and Tocqueville's *Democracy in America.* I would not find place, in these first two, for *The Federalist* papers, or for a copy of the amended Constitution of the United States, or for any book by a contemporary political scientist, sociologist, or historian.

Yet it does not seem to me remotely true that an ancient Greek philosopher and a French publicist of the early 19th century have supplied, in information or analysis or evaluation, all that can usefully illumine the government of the United States in our time. I find studies of American government published every year that add something significant to the knowledge of political fact and relationship. And, at longer intervals, this writing does, I think, also occasionally make some addition to the understanding of more enduring questions of politics.

II

ONE AREA in which political studies have, I believe, been decidedly progressive, during the past three decades, is exemplified by the thoughtful and pleasantly written little book which the late V. O. Key, Jr. left "more than three-fourths completed" at his death in October 1963.† This is the area of opinion polls and surveys. It used to be fashionable for highbrow students of politics to condemn this work as the fruit of the devil. (Perhaps also their noses were put out of joint by the fact that, in survey technique, political studies had learned from increased sophistication developed partly in market surveys—for things bought and sold.) Did not the election poll give a vicious "bandwagon" impetus? And would not the opinion survey convert the elected politician from a responsible representative—giving his constituents the services of a developing mind—into a robot delegate, transmitting machine-like the uninformed preferences of his electors? As the sign said, which hung in a Congressman's office, "Watch out! You can be replaced by a button!"

But a well-designed opinion survey informs. And it never dictates. A good survey can do far more than supply a reliable prediction of the outcome of an election. It can elicit from the voter something of the contour of his whole political outlook. Which of specified recent actions of government caused him pain, and in which did

* *L'Idee De L'Etat,* third edition, Paris, Hachette, 1898, quotation, p. IX.

† *The Responsible Electorate. Rationality in Presidential Voting 1936-1960.* With the assistance of Milton C. Cummings, Jr., Harvard, 1966.

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he take pleasure? What sustained characteristics does he attribute to the parties, and does he regard these characteristics as good or bad? How does he link actual political alternatives with the interests of his own social group, or of general prosperity, or of peace? What does he seek in political leaders, and who does he think has those qualities?

A President or a senator or congressman can be greatly assisted by a well-constructed opinion survey. Sometimes he will be assisted more than by reading his constituents' letters or talking to the private people he meets. The gain in coverage and system may more than compensate for the loss of intimacy. By 1970, the average senator will have a constituency of over 2,000,000 people, and the average representative nearly 480,000. Opinion surveys can help such elected officials to participate more intelligently in the continuing dialogue of government.

KEY FINDS that, in the Presidential elections of 1936-60, the electorate was "responsible." The voters acted coherently:

> From our analyses, the voter emerges as a person who appraises the actions of government, who has policy preferences and who relates his vote to those appraisals and preferences.

Looking to issues, Key devalues—as I think, too far—the weight of the personal factor in Presidential elections. He goes too far particularly, I suspect, in downgrading (page 77) the importance of the Eisenhower personality in 1952.* But even there, he is a useful corrective.

Behind the Republican victories of 1952 and 1956, he observes major voter shifts. First, dissatisfaction with the Truman administration: in 1952 the voters judged, by 3 to 2, that Truman had done a poor job; even in 1960 the voters thought, by 2 to 1, that Eisenhower had done well. Then also, in 1952 and 1956 and even in 1960, the voters thought that, on balance, the Republicans were the better party for peace, and American voters always prefer what they regard as the peace party. But even during 1952-56, a majority of the voters thought of the Democratic as *their* party, as the party which would take better care of *them*, and would better assure general prosperity. When these domestic and impersonal concerns reasserted their primacy, the Democrats came back to the White House in a "reinstating election"—back to post-1932 normalcy.

Key is clear that Kennedy did not win in 1960 on his personality, his religion, or as a partisan of peace. The net of each of these concerns seems, in fact, to have favored Nixon. The Democratic party's victory in 1960 rested rather on economic and partisan grounds. And, though Kennedy ran well behind the congressional and local candidates of his party, he did not run so far behind his party's "normal" as to lose. On the Kennedy-Nixon exposure of issues, this book is not flattering:

> . . . the "great debates," tailored to the requisites of show business, did not enable the candidates to develop their positions on the questions confronting the country. As debates, these affairs hovered at a level somewhere in the neighborhood of bush-league college debates. The TV screen conveyed not much more than an impression of the relative glibness, composure under fire, capacity in repartee, and quickness of wit of the contenders. . . . The candidates were, on their record, personable ciphers.

It is a book not heavy but helpful to understanding. It deserves to be read.

III

MORE WEIGHTY, and from a greatly different ambience, is Bernard Schwartz's treatise, *The Rights of Property*.† Standing third in a projected five-volume commentary on the American Constitution, it is a jurist's book, but not inaccessible to any deliberate reader. The exposition is always clear and consequent; sometimes it achieves a compact, lawyerly elegance.

During the century since the Civil War, the United States has experienced two great political dominances—each of which also developed its own characteristic formulation of the rights of property. Simplifying, we may call the first, "the system of 1896," and the second, "the system of 1932." The shift from one of these dominances to the other was perhaps greater, in general social import, than the changes which resulted from the American Revolution or the American Civil War. In 1921, when the system of 1896 was intact, a federal judge could assert (in the great *Adkins* case) " . . . of the three fundamental principles which underlie government, and for which government exists, the protection of life, liberty and property, the chief of these is property." A generation later, this assertion would have been impossible. The related displacement of one constitutional system of property by another is the central theme of Schwartz's book.

On the electoral level, the divide did come in 1932. But in the law of the Constitution, the new outlook did not win through until 1937. In *Nebbia v. New York* (1934), the Supreme Court may perhaps be judged to have anticipated its later position. But the decisions in *Railroad Retirement Board v. Alton* (1935) and *Moorhead v. New York* (1936) still belong to the system of 1896. It was in three fundamental 1937 decisions—*National Labor Relations Board v. Jones and Laughlin, West Coast Hotel v. Parrish,* and *Stewart Machine*

* I am strengthened in the opinion that Key may here be in error by evidence, from the Michigan Survey Research Center, that already in 1952, Eisenhower's personal attraction was stronger than Johnson's in 1964. See "Contests for the Presidency," by Donald E. Stokes, in the *American Political Science Review* of March 1966, especially p. 22.

† *A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States,* Part II, Macmillan, 1965.

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v. Davis—that the new constitutional system was put on foot. And only after the further decision in *United States v. Darby* (1941) could there be no serious doubt of its survival.

In the previous fifty years, the superior courts regularly protected property against the Congress and the state legislatures. Between 1890 and 1937, the Supreme Court of the United States held unconstitutional 55 federal statutes and 228 state statutes. Let Schwartz describe the new order:

> Since 1936 . . . despite a proliferation of laws limiting the rights of property, no such law has been held violative of due process by the highest bench. . . . Under the present expanding conception of public welfare, . . . the individual property right is bound to give way whenever it is weighed against a law that bears a reasonable relationship to some . . . social interest.

The courts have ceased to be the great, effective defenders of the claims of the propertied to sovereign immunity.

Today, American jurisdictions must still pay for property they take; they must observe a modicum of even-handedness in condemnation proceedings; and they must permit a "fair return" in regulated industries. Otherwise, they are free to burden property rights and to reshape them as legislatures think best. If the President and Congress were of a mind today (as I think it well that they are not) to establish in the United States as much national ownership of industry as prevails in the United Kingdom, they would find the courts no serious barrier. There would be no need to resort to the cumbrous process of constitutional amendment. As Schwartz says:

> . . . one must today conclude that the basic document gives the widest leeway for governmental experiments that are socialistic in nature. . . . It is not the business of the law to prescribe economic limits for the society or to deny it the right to experimentation within very wide limits. That is to be left for contest by the political forces in the community.

In 1927, a great-minded American philosopher, Morris R. Cohen, was drawn to emphasize the equation between property and sovereignty. No mind of similar quality would be moved toward that image by the American structure of property rights in 1966.

I do not wish to suggest that Schwartz's treatise follows with consistent, clear-sighted approval the transformation of the constitutional law of property which it faithfully records. On the contrary, this book—somewhat strangely—follows an evolution not unlike that of the American constitutional doctrine itself. Only at the end (and in the preface) is the author quite comfortable in the contemporary Zion. At the beginning (p. 22), he tells us that both persons and property must be protected by law " . . . since both are *equally* essential" [italics mine]. There he concludes that " . . . personal rights and property rights are the two faces of a single coin—which is the specie of the free society." And he draws this conclusion just after quoting John Adams: "The moment the idea is admitted into society, that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, . . . anarchy and tyranny commence." But it would be quite unfair to identify Schwartz's mature position (pp. 231-33) with Adams's blasphemy—or with his own early statements. "The recent law," he ends soberly, "has permitted a social transformation of property that can be compared . . . only with the institution of the feudal and then the free-enterprise systems, and the notions of property upon which they were based." And he welcomes this transformation.

As his is a legal commentary, Schwartz understandably focuses on the decisions of courts as marking the decisive steps in development. But we must not be deceived by this pedagogic device into believing that judges and courts played the major creative role in breaking the path from the old conception of the rights of property to the new. The courts deserve no such credit. In this area, the initiative of the Supreme Court has not been comparable to its activity in school integration or electoral apportionment, where the high court has functioned as a supplementary legislature —making a way when other legislatures were stalemated. In transforming the structure of property rights, the initiative lay consistently with political representatives—with executives and legislatures. At best, the courts followed, affixing their *nihil obstat* without undue delay. It is easy to exaggerate even the secondary contribution which the high courts made to broadening the thoroughfare, by giving explicit formulation to the doctrines under which legislatures might act. The history taught in law schools can be a starved image of life.

IV

Among the books under immediate examination, Grant McConnell's *Private Power and American Democracy* (Knopf) stands out for posing hard, important political questions. The author also wrestles tenaciously with the analysis of these questions, and he deploys a great range of relevant learning. If nevertheless, in the end, the book left me disappointed, the reasons are, I think, both in the inadequacies of the underlying political philosophy and in the halting performance in chapters other than the best.

In the literature of American government, McConnell belongs with the school of Schattschneider rather than with Bentley.* That is: he leans, in aspiration, away from pluralism; he values the contest of large national parties rather than a system of accommodations among multiple interest

* E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960. A. F. Bentley, *The Process of Government*, Chicago, 1908.

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groups; he finds a national jurisdiction a better place for important decisions than state, local, and occupational jurisdictions; and he believes that a politics of national parties will give a better hearing to the poor and the Negro than will a politics of decentralized groups. In all these things, McConnell stands, to my mind, on the side of the angels. Also, students of American politics would do well to reflect on the message of his chapter, "The Progressive Legacy." And I wish all advocates of decentralization in the United States could be induced to read his most thoughtful chapter, "The Constituency."

To clarify the nullity of the Progressive ideology, as it concerns the wielding of the public power, is a central task in McConnell's enterprise. (The economics of Progressivism also came near to zero, but that is marginal to his scope.) Man—the individual, the voter—is virtuous, said the Progressives. But interest groups are self-seeking, and parties corrupt. The voter is sufficient, though he can use civil servants—if they are honest, business-like, and scientific. Direct democracy, if feasible, would be best. Next best is indirect democracy, reinforced by the popular initiative, referendum, and recall. Restrain "the interests"; smash the parties; make elected officers sensitively responsive to the voters; all will be well. No parties, no leaders, no sustained contest of alternative doctrines, tendencies or sympathies. Government purified. So the Progressive thought, and so runs much of American political imagery even today.

In the ideology of American pluralists and Progressives, a decentralized jurisdiction—based on vocation or locality—comes next in praise after non-partisan, sensitive levers of majority control. Again, McConnell is of the opposite persuasion. Whether it is a farm, a factory, a neighborhood, or a labor union, the little cell can squeeze tight. The smallest can be the most oppressive. McConnell argues:

> The tendency inherent in small units to stratification of power relationships and to protection of established informal patterns of domination and subordination is most alien to equality. . . . [And] the absence of law and of the respect for the values of impersonality and impartiality which law implies is a poor guarantee of freedom. . . .

A national constituency, he contends, is more likely than a random small one to find effective support for policies separate from immediate interests.

So far so good. But, having expressed hopefulness for the potentialities of the national constituency, McConnell does not take the slightest step toward outlining the public principles—deliberate objectives, chosen ends, general policies—in accordance with which he considers it fitting for the national constituency to act. (The words "equality" and "liberty" do appear a few times in his pages, but without more defining content than they would bear in a conventional Fourth of July oration.) It is not that he is a consistent amoralist; on the contrary, he writes, in a single page (p. 367), of "virtues," of what "should be preferred" and of what "is best." But he goes not one step—systematically or illustratively—in relating these things to any substantive content, other than the approval of the national constituency. Why should we choose to give our support to what the national constituency happens to desire? (What if its dominant desire is to establish a Great Germany in the world?) McConnell gives us no clue to finding our way from what happens, as a mere matter of fact, to be widely desired in the national constituency toward what he regards as, morally and politically, fitting to be desired. On the contrary, he closes on a note of nationalist eyewash—expressed in an imagery of apocalyptic historicism of a kind Americans like to believe comes more naturally in German:

> . . . its [the public interest's] greatest difficulty is the common lack of a national constituency. American democracy has been one of the great adventures of history. Its career has been marked with danger, but repeatedly the danger has been overcome. That career deserves to proceed toward its fulfillment.

Make way for the *Volksgeist*!

V

A HALF-CENTURY ago, Charles A. Beard published an arresting study, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913). Beard was deeply saturated in the Progressive outlook. He then saw the Constitution as a conservative instrument for the defense of property and a high barrier to majority rule. (Writing in the full spate of "the system of 1896," he had reasons!) Clinton Rossiter now gives us a readable narrative on the same subject, *1787: The Grand Convention* (Macmillan). Without offense, Rossiter may fairly be described as deeply saturated in the consensus outlook of the politics of the mid-1960's. He calls the Constitution both conservative and liberal; it is, for him, a product of the highest political wisdom and an instrument flexibly—though not precipitately—adaptable to the varying purposes of a continental democracy.

Perhaps the most interesting facet of Rossiter's book is his description of the antecedents, careers, minds, and manners of the American elite which took the initiative in arranging for a constitutional convention, drafting the Constitution, and securing its ratification. They were, in great part, the men who had made the Revolution. Rossiter finds them in 1787 " . . . all but a handful . . . engaged in a quest for nationhood. . . ." Their solidity of purpose is already suggested by their willingness to sit, debating and drafting, with minor recesses, from May 25 through September 17. Jefferson acclaimed

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them "an assembly of demigods," and Madison judged, more soberly, that they constituted "the best contribution of talents the states could make." Dominantly rich, trying to be rich, or well-to-do, Rossiter describes them sympathetically as

> . . . an elite adjusting the tension of principle and interest within its own membership, and at the same time interacting with the publics to which it was ultimately accountable. . . .

He judges their purposes to have been

> . . . an end to disorder, a forestalling of despotism, protection for personal liberty, security for private property, honor for the Republic. If pressed hard, most would have acknowledged that they were certainly not there to sell out the interests of their states and sections, to transfer the reins of authority to another class of men, or to lay the groundwork for a social revolution.

Rossiter does not hold that the America of 1787 constituted one big, happy middle-class family. In a population of some 3,900,000, perhaps three per cent, he thinks, formed an aristocracy of the "rich and well-born." Below them, came the large body of "sober and steady people." These two were the political classes. But, lower down, perhaps a fifth of the population were free men "mired in a swamp of much poverty and little hope"—and of negligible political weight. And at the bottom were about 680,000 Negro slaves. The Constitution was drafted and ratified in a period of economic difficulties, of deflation, of demands for easy money and debt moratoria on one side, of insistence on sound money and adherence to contracts on the other. "The class structure in America has rarely been more visible, nor more visibly scarred by mistrust, than in the paper-money turmoils of the 1780's." In 1787, a majority of the continental elite, living in the more developed eastern areas, thought the United States was on the verge of dissolution; they desired a stronger union. The small farmers of the West were dubious; they preferred local liberty. Rossiter summarizes:

> The Framers came together in 1787 just as most of them had gone to war in 1776: not to make the world over but to make their corner of it secure, not with hearts full of envy or pity but with minds full of apprehension and prudence. . . . The Constitution they wrote was not the first act of a second revolution; . . . It did not demand, it did not even anticipate an upheaval in the social order or a forced redistribution of property; it did not challenge any existing institution or arrangement in the American economy, society, culture, or pattern of religion.

What impresses in the Framers of 1787, what distinguishes those personalities from their descendants, is their repeated initiatives, and their sustained receptivity to large ideas. As Rossiter says, "If none of the Framers was a doctrinaire, almost all were men of doctrine, and doctrine scored a smashing victory in 1787 as it had in 1776." In 1787, the dominant American leadership thought that men could make and remake governments. And, they were of the opinion that, by taking thought, a political community might add a cubit to its stature.

VI

In depth of coverage, few studies of recent American politics will bear comparison with the multi-volumed work on the Presidency of Woodrow Wilson which Arthur S. Link has been publishing since 1947. With its fifth volume now issued,* it is still at least three from the end.

The Wilson who emerges from this study was little interested in domestic social and economic policy. Insofar as he had settled views, they were those of "the system of 1896." Use of the law to secure for the weak more than they could get in the market, he called class legislation—and patently unconstitutional. Until 1916, he was cold to the minimum wage, to the prohibition of child labor, to workmen's compensation, and to security for unions to organize. He approved the tightening of Negro segregation in federal employments. He was opposed to woman suffrage. In 1912, his program was "free enterprise," and he denounced Theodore Roosevelt as a dangerous radical. In November 1914, he published a letter announcing that his New Freedom was now accomplished, and America needed no more reforms. As Link has written, "To try to portray such a man as an ardent social reformer is to defy the plain record."

But Wilson had received only 42 per cent of the popular vote in 1912. As the election of 1916 approached, he became alert to the need for Progressive support. At the age of fifty-nine, he found his heart again inclined to reform. He played up to Progressive opinion by nominating Louis D. Brandeis to the Supreme Court. He overcame his own "fire of conscience" which had initially told him that government credits to farmers are immoral. He gave support to an eight-hour day for railroad workers. And, in July 1916, he even urged his party in Congress to enact child labor and workmen's compensation laws—both unconstitutional under the system of 1896. Only when income and estate taxes were pushed through Congress, in the late summer of 1916, did Wilson stand aside: to endorse these would be too forward. Nevertheless, in the election of 1916, Wilson succeeded in making himself the Progressive candidate as well as the peace candidate. On October 15, 1916, William Howard Taft wrote, in a private letter:

> I believe the whole business and intelligent part of the community to be thoroughly roused against Wilson, except maybe the Jews, and the

* *Wilson: Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace 1916-1917*, Princeton, 1965.

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college professors who are crazy on the subject of humanity without knowing what humanity is.

Wilson, the inconstant social reformer, emerges clearly from Link's pages. But the Wilson who took the United States into World War I remains a puzzle, unresolved. Why did he decide to go to war? It is easy to see why the two belligerent sides did not take seriously his 1916-17 efforts to mediate a draw. Each had large territorial objectives which it could not secure in any mediation. Besides, the British and French authorities never lost the conviction that the United States would eventually come in on their side: they were told so repeatedly by Wilson's disloyal entourage. And as for the German authorities, they eventually became convinced that unlimited submarine warfare would bring them victory despite anything the United States could do. Wounding to American self-esteem as that fact may be, alike in World War I and World War II, the German highest command held the United States likely to be a negligible factor in the military outcome.

But why did Wilson decide to go in? It was not because of popular pressure: until *after* the decision for war was taken, the weight of public sentiment was for peace. It was not because of some rigid policy regarding submarine warfare: Link shows brilliantly that Wilson had no such policy. It was not because he believed there was some great preponderance of justice on the Allied side: he did not believe that. It was not because he thought the Allies were about to lose and a German victory would endanger American security: he did not then know how utterly dependent the Allies had become on U.S. finance and supply. Why then? Link has told us several times. Here he concludes:

> Wilson accepted belligerent status for two reasons, mainly: because he could see no other way to protect American national rights and shipping on the high seas in the face of repeated German assaults, and because he believed that the war was in its final stages and American participation would hasten its end.

But these conclusions do not emerge from the narrative. On February 25, 1917, Wilson was still passionately against entry. On March 14th, he held firmly that war was not inevitable. Yet by April 6th, he had requested a declaration of war and Congress had approved it. How—to a mind as firm against war as Wilson's—could the events of the intervening three weeks have made that much difference?

It is the characteristic of a good historian that he provides the reader with a basis for questioning the historian's own conclusions. After reading Link's impressive testimony more than once, I find his conclusions, concerning Wilson's decision to intervene, quite unpersuasive. All members of Wilson's cabinet and all his personal advisers had long been for war. Perhaps, in the heightened tension of unlimited submarine warfare, the weight of this immediate personal environment overbore all reasons.

VII

In the Washington political apparatus, the professional student of government has no serious place. The lawyers are here the most esteemed of the learned professions: they are always indispensable counselors, sometimes responsible chancellors. The economists are a poor second: they are frequently counselors, but never yet chancellors. The professional student of government is a non-entrant. Sometimes he is (mistakenly) credited with some special competence in "administration" or "personnel"; but, in these matters, he is (rightly) entrusted only the lower level responsibilities. A professor of politics may become a President: Woodrow Wilson is the example. A professor of politics may also become Secretary of State: remember Dean Rusk. But, in these posts, the professional student of government is regarded as having left his profession. As Hans Kelsen somewhere writes, "as a pumpkin may become a bottle, after its natural content has been removed."

On general grounds, I would not expect the next years to see a flowering of political philosophy in the United States. Consensus politics seems likely to be dominant: such a politics is variously served by rhetoric, civic training, and scientism; it feeds no impulse toward philosophy. Also, language analysis has a large place in current philosophic interest: this seems unlikely to contribute anything of value in politics. Moreover, a genuine—not merely affected—rejection of all values and obligations is undoubtedly gaining some adherence: on both logical and psychological grounds, this tendency is not likely to lead to anything of architectonic character. On the other hand, one might not have to despair of something of value in American political philosophy if one could believe that views like those of Henry David Aiken ("The Revolt Against Ideology," COMMENTARY, April 1964), were gaining ground among Americans with philosophic interests.

We will be safest in anticipating studies of the kind to which Frederic Maitland once gave high praise: "I think . . . some of the best because the truest . . . books are those which are professedly fragmentary, those which by their every page impress upon the reader that he has only got before him a small part of the whole tale."

Political studies of that kind we have before us, and shall no doubt continue to have.

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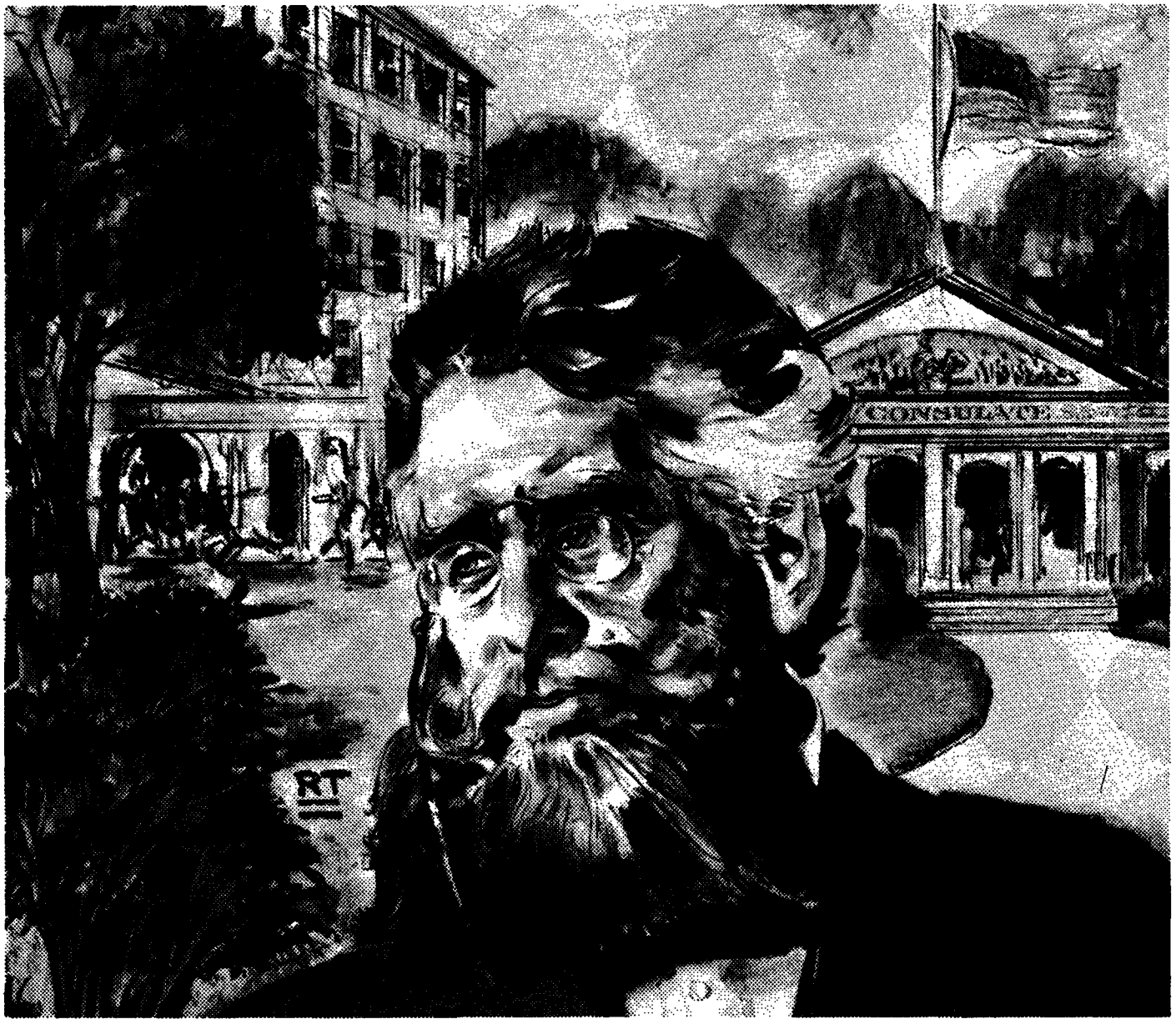

Diplomat With a Mission.

The year was 1871. Benjamin F. Peixotto, the first American Consul-General to Bucharest, was presenting his credentials to the Roumanian rulers, in the form of a letter from President Grant. Part of the letter read: "... Mr. Peixotto has undertaken the duties of his present office more as a missionary work for the benefit of the people he represents, than for any benefit to accrue to himself."

"Missionary work" was not a misnomer. For Peixotto, a Jew, had accepted a diplomatic post in a country which was decidedly anti-Semitic. But Peixotto was used to working for Jewish causes.

In 1863, he had joined B'nai B'rith. There, he worked to repeal the law that forbade non-believers in the New Testament from holding public office in North Carolina. Building a home for Jewish children whose fathers were killed in the Civil War was another of his projects.

Peixotto carried this same zeal with him to Roumania. He worked to stifle impending anti-Semitic legislation, and his efforts were amply rewarded when the legislation met defeat. He improved Jewish educational standards in schools. To bring about better unity, he helped form the Order of Zion, which later was affiliated with B'nai B'rith.

The historian, Max J. Kohler, said of Peixotto: "His chief merit was recognized to have been his services in rousing all Europe, as well as the United States, against Roumanian anti-Semitic intolerance and the importance of international action."

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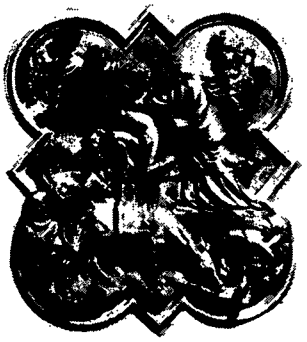

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MUSGRAVE'S DANCE AND AZDAK'S CIRCLE

Jack Richardson

JOHN ARDEN is considered by many close to the theater to be England's best contemporary playwright. Neither a social protestant like John Osborne and Arnold Wesker, nor an absurdist like Harold Pinter, he has missed all the publicity attendant on these styles. Consequently, his best known work, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance,* had to wait some seven years after its debut at the Royal Court Theater in London for a New York production. As a play, it is far from faultless: it must bear the indictments of ambiguity, of otiose sub-plots, of often unearned lyricism, and of inapposite stylistic shenanigans. Still, while not raising Arden irrefutably above his colleagues, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* is a uniquely memorable play. For all his faulty theatrics and literary fits of absence of mind, Arden can write with a terseness and passion which somehow hold his formal fragments together, making out of them a work of art. He may not be always in control, but then he has chosen such a large theme, and responded to it with such unselfconscious seriousness and complexity, that moments of shaky orchestration become only mildly jarring.

The plot itself of *Musgrave* is not over-complicated. Four English soldiers serving in Queen Victoria's army have deserted. Their defection is prompted by a surfeit of war and, in particular, reprisals they have been ordered to make after one of their comrades was killed by the natives of a colony in rebellion. Somehow, carrying the corpse of their friend, they wind their way back to England and, at the play's opening, pretending to be a recruiting detachment, they are about to enter a North Country collier town ostensibly to put on an exhibition glamorizing a soldier's life and enticing volunteers. From the outset, however, it is clear that a demonstration of another sort is planned, for their leader, Serjeant Musgrave, has taken it upon himself to crusade against the exploitation of the common man in war. Dour and military in manner, he clings to a small Bible and looks ahead to the "dance" he will perform in the city square when he will make God's logic manifest to the miners: five people had been killed in payment for one English soldier's life—five for one—and therefore twenty-five Englishmen should be the next step in analytic escalation. Those twenty-five bodies will be a sanguinary, ostensive definition of the waste and terror he may be too inarticulate to express. The men with him share only partly in his plans. One, an old soldier, merely wants to tell the people that all killing should be stopped; another, a new recruit, barely understands the mission he has somehow been chosen to carry out, and fears his Serjeant's fanaticism more than he does war itself; a third has simply been embittered by his experience, and wants to retaliate indiscriminately against the world.

As the play wanders through portraits of townspeople, miners, and officials, all caught in a bitter strike, it becomes apparent that the chief obstacle to Musgrave's vision will be the very people he is trying to save. The drunk, cloddish workingmen, beset with their own very specific problems of survival, are either too suspicious or too self-seeking to be concerned with an evangelical Serjeant. Indeed, one of Arden's not altogether successful characters, a sort of devious Everyman, is the one finally to hold a bayonet to Musgrave's throat and deliver him over to military authority.

BUT MUSGRAVE does have his dance. With a cross-section of the town onstage as audience, he condemns with sardonic adulation the machine guns, bayonets, and all the other shiny homicidal paraphernalia meant to dazzle the potential recruit. With spastic, furibund emotion he tells of the retribution of five-for-one. And finally he hoists the skeletal remains of his comrade —a former neighbor of the spectators—up the square's flagpole. But when it comes to following his "logic," he falters. Looking to the miners for support of his proposition, he finds only incomprehension or fear and realizes that his demonstration will be self-defeating. The twenty-five corpses will just send everyone behind doors to hide from blame, and, more than this, Musgrave has had too much of the cycle of death to add to it, even if his addition should prove the last. In the end, he is reduced to incoherent rage and, finally, to exhausted submission to the manacles authority puts on his wrists.

A number of critics felt that Musgrave, for all his talk of logic, was too uncontrolled, contradictory, and extreme to be taken for anything but a sad symbol of lunacy. For a moment, when Arden's hero's notion of progressive slaughter is considered, one may be tempted to agree with them. But then, after all, consider the problem Musgrave has set about to solve. On our planet it allows of no reasonable solution, and trying to discover one—indeed, being passionately committed to its discovery —leads, through the maze of obstacles the world can set up against someone out to keep it from self-extinction, past rational boundaries to desperate acts. Musgrave may, like the young men who incinerate themselves to protest a war, be mad, but what is sanity's alternative? The logic of this groping, death-haunted Serjeant, like Arden's play itself, can, in its agitation, produce only contraries. Neat solutions would make some critics happy; it would make the play and Musgrave less.

When I took on the job of reviewing plays, I vowed I would not follow the rather insulting practice of leaving my remarks on acting and production to a final, packed paragraph, as though they were meant to be space-filling afterthoughts. However, regarding the Establishment Theater's presentation of *Musgrave,* I find they belong nowhere else. As I have said, Arden is not excessively consistent in tone, but he deserved much more than the hodge-podge of style director Stuart Burge and his actors foisted on him. It has been a long time since I have seen actors sporting their characterizations like new forty-dollar suits, as did half of this

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company. One would have to go back to silent films, and I am not nostalgic, to uncover the equivalent in mugging and unidimensional playing. However, let me say that John Colicos is, except for his final large moments, a good Musgrave, giving just the right hints of fury behind his military control; that Leigh Wharton, as the old private, is meticulously correct; and that W. B. Bryden is perhaps the best of all as the strike leader who will not allow himself to understand the message Musgrave brings. As for the rest—the charity of silence.

THE Lincoln Center Repertory Theater, after a rough, sea-tossed season, has managed to make it to summer port with some honor left on its flag. This was accomplished by a spotty, but often exciting and amusing, production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* under the direction of Jules Irving. I have not seen all the Brecht productions that have passed through New York, and I have not made the, for a theater critic, mandatory pilgrimage to the *Berliner Ensemble*, the company created by Brecht particularly to meet the exigencies of his works. However, within the scope of the dozen or so Brecht plays I've been audience to, the Lincoln Center Company's presentation is the overall best.

This, let me say, is not effusive praise. In most instances, Brecht has proven to be a disastrous undertaking in England and America. The sharp, epigrammatic vernacular in which he writes usually translates into some sort of abstract slang never yet spoken nor heard by human beings; his theories of audience alienation and of detached, objective acting, though useful to him, have caused certain directors to people the stage with tepid cartoons that not only "alienate" but anaesthetize the spectator. Finally, and what is perhaps the most difficult hurdle of all, Brecht often fell prey to that Teutonic sentimentality which dotes on warm-hearted paradoxes like the philanthropic robber or the consumptive whore in love with her fellow man. For all his tough-minded aesthetics and socio-economic theories, Brecht could never be as detached as he wished actor and audience to be. This perhaps saved his plays from bleak didacticism, but it has created all sorts of difficulties for those forced practically to reconcile his theories with a production at hand.

Fortunately, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* is neatly bifurcated. The sentiment in this parabolic tale is all loaded into its first part, which narrates the adventures of Grusha, the noble-hearted peasant girl who rescues the son of the recently assassinated governor, and then, with the infant strapped to her back, is pursued, Little-Eva-like, by soldiers out to destroy the heir to the old government. Gradually, as she is buffeted by the brutality of authority and the indifference of her equals, she grows closer to the child until she feels all but the nominal rights of maternity. The question of the parable has been raised: Does ownership depend upon birthright or upon the ability to care for a possession?

Azdak, one of Brecht's greatest characters, will supply the answer. He is a logic-twisting scoundrel, clown, and toady with a peasant's instinct for survival and a concomitant Brechtian sense of justice. He will do anything, no matter how consciously demeaning, to keep the powers he detests from destroying him, for when the rare moments of the upper hand come his way, he wishes to be around to take advantage of them. Excoriator of the masses and their first defender, Azdak has been likened by some to Brecht himself, and indeed it is highly probable that this cunning, all-too-human dialectician, conniving for existence in an irrational world, is a self-portrait of the artist.

THROUGH THE accidents of state power struggles, then, this village scrivener becomes an interim judge. After a series of trials where he parodies law to obtain justice, Azdak finds Grusha has come before him to claim the child that has been taken back by its mother, the governor's wife, now in favor again. After readily taking bribes from both sides, Azdak has the young boy placed in a chalk circle and orders the two claimants to pull away at him—the one first

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drawing the boy across the circle's line to be judged the winner. As in the tale of Solomon, the one—Grusha, of course—who has not the heart to tear the child asunder is awarded title of mother over him. Thus, the parable's question is answered: possession is earned by the worthiest.

Whatever one may think of the validity of this point of view, it is only the point of the parable within the play Brecht has written, not of the play itself. Far more central is the question of reason and its social uses. Brecht considered intelligence and its rational employment to be the means and end of a just society, and if he was against emotive hysteria in the arts, he was doubly put off by attitudes, no matter how noble, that left cold, disinterested reason out of their formation. Amid all the pratfalls, jokes, and theatrics of Azdak lies the stern message: "See how reason must get by in this world. Only in masquerade, only in playing the servant to ignorance. Caveat: To be court philosopher one must also master the rudiments of being court jester!" And even when, as in the parable of the chalk circle, reason has its day, this is brought about only by chance, lasts briefly, and then vanishes. One of the last stage directions in the play has the people dancing in celebration of Azdak's just decision while he, joining them only for a moment, gradually fades from view never to be heard from again. *Sic transit ratio.*

For a long time, the best works of the theater have held man's reason to be little more than an object for burlesque humor. Genet mistrusted it; Ionesco mocked an academic version of it; and Beckett sets out to prove it a monster. It is hopeful to see Brecht and Arden, writers from two generations with a war between them, chronicling reason's tragedy and lamenting its absence.

"THE COMMUNIST RABBI": MOSES HESS

Jonathan Frankel

Moses Hess is an anomaly. A founding father of revolutionary socialism in Germany, he is best remembered today as the first "secular Zionist." An enthusiast handicapped by an open mind, he took up many causes but found satisfaction in none. It was not by chance that already in the 1840's his socialist comrades had dubbed him "the Communist Rabbi."

As a rebel, Hess gravitated from the first toward the Left-Hegelian circle in Berlin, the group which numbered among its members Friedrich Strauss, Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and Marx and Engels. The Left Hegelians at first accepted the premises of the master, but only to draw diametrically opposed conclusions from them. Thus, they granted the view, held by Hegel in his later years, of the Idea (or Absolute) as incarnated in the world, and as working itself out in history. But they did not grant its corollary—that it was therefore the duty of rational men to seek out and recognize the element of sanctity in the existent; instead, they saw it as the obligation of the philosopher (as of the citizen) to seek out the irrational in society or the state—and then to criticize it mercilessly. If the Hegelian Idea was to be best served, the boundaries of freedom had to be extended, which meant, in practice, a relentless critical campaign against the forces of darkness which were embodied in the established church and its dogma, as well as in all other ideas or institutions that sought to restrict rational thought or action. From this position to political activism was but one short step, and from 1841 to 1847, Hess, like Marx and Engels, was engaged in building a bridge (and burning it behind him as he went) from Left Hegelianism to a political theory grounded in economics and a program of proletarian revolution. Moreover, at this stage of the transition period at least, Hess was a pioneer, for right from the start he had seen in Hegelianism not merely a vantage point for radical social criticism, but a force for total social change. Thus, in his first book, published in 1837, Hess already described the inevitable goal of the historical process as a society in which all men would be fully free and equal.

It was not until four years later, however, after the publication of his *European Trierarchy*, that Hess

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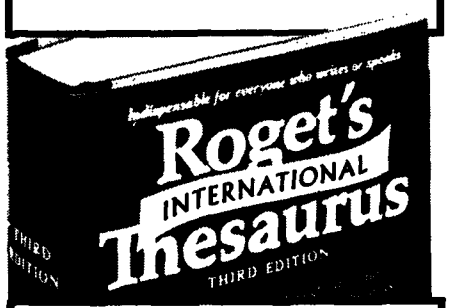

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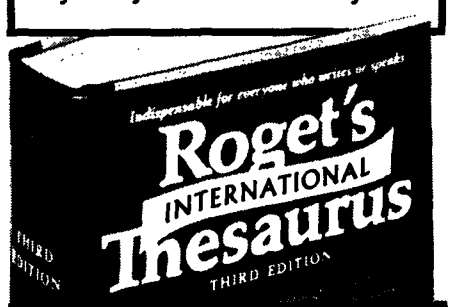

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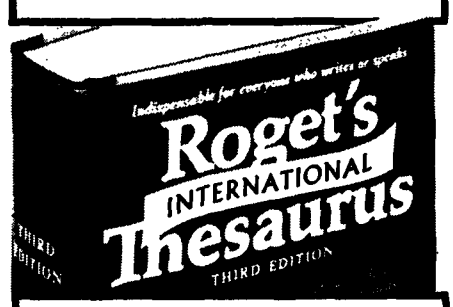

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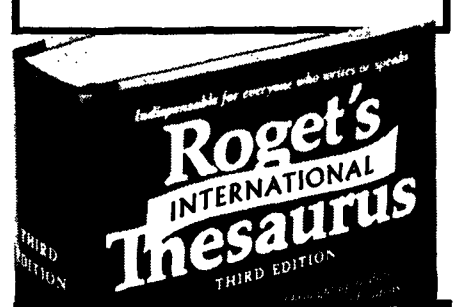

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was finally accepted as one of their number by the Left Hegelian circle in Berlin. He now argued that German philosophy had to renounce its condition of splendid isolation, embrace the French revolutionary tradition, and recognize the industrial proletariat (which was already emerging so rapidly in Britain) as the driving force of the future. The world had to be transformed, not improved.

Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, published that same year, gave Hess an additional weapon in his attempt to draw socialist conclusions from German philosophic thought. Feuerbach saw in the entire structure of Hegelian metaphysics—no less than in all other theological or quasi-theological constructions—simply another product of the human imagination, a further example of man's alienation from his own spiritual and moral nature. Man had created God, Feuerbach argued, but now the time had come for him to recognize his own true nature, to fuse within himself the moral and the natural, the divine and the animal. The era of theology was over; the era of "anthropology" had arrived in its stead.

For Hess, Feuerbach's overturning of Hegelianism was a landmark in the continuing liberation of man—a process which could not stop with the creation of the autonomous individual, as Feuerbach seemed to suggest (and Stirner now proclaimed), but had to be extended to society as a whole. For man to find his true nature, it was not enough to abolish the concept of a transcendental Deity and seek God within himself; he also had to abolish all forms of social inequality. In a series of articles, Hess now argued that private wealth represented the labor power of the weak who had been forced to surrender what was really a part of themselves—the fruits of their work. In a capitalist society, in other words, man worshipped not only his alienated spirit in the form of God, but also his alienated labor in the form of money. Only a communist system could liberate him from God and Mammon, the two tyrants he had himself created. But before this goal could be reached, thought would have to become action and the philosophers would have to become politicians of the extreme Left.

From 1841 to 1845, Hess was accepted as an equal and even as a guide by Marx and Engels. It was Hess who encouraged Marx to join the editorial staff of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the Left-Hegelian journal he had helped found in his home city of Cologne; there Marx gained his first intimate experience of day-to-day politics. It was Hess, too, who persuaded Engels that the logical culmination of German philosophy must be an uncompromising demand for the total abolition of private property. ("My conversion to Communism was definitely due to Hess.") And it was Hess, again, who saw in the British proletariat a national prototype of what was to come into being everywhere, thereby giving Engels the incentive to undertake his crucial study of Manchester factory life, which was published in 1844 as *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

In 1845, Hess and Engels launched a campaign to rally the workers of the Rhineland to their program. Though the enterprise did not get much further than a popular journal and a series of public rallies, and was apparently regarded as an entertaining curiosity by the respectable burghers of the area, it marked the first attempt of those Left Hegelians who now referred to themselves as "Communists" to organize the emergent industrial proletariat in Germany along political lines. While Engels and Hess were thus seeking action, Marx was laying the philosophical groundwork for his new-found communist faith—until his journey to Paris in 1843 Marx had been more radical democrat than socialist. In his new synthesis Marx now included both Hess's conception of private property as the "self-alienation" of man, and his view of the future communist society as an expression of man's true nature.

But the year 1846 saw the end of the partnership, at least so far as Hess was concerned. Marx was finding his own feet and no longer needed guidance or, for that matter, competition—he was now at the

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point of beginning to assert his claim to the leadership both of European socialist thought and of the minuscule German "Communist" movement. He fell out with his former allies one by one: Karl Grün, Arnold Ruge, William Weitling, were the first to go; in 1847 he launched his attack on Proudhon, and a year later, in the *Communist Manifesto*, he and Engels jointly denounced Hess as the proponent of a viewpoint that "objectively strengthened" bourgeois society. There was a good deal of irony in this denunciation, not only because Marx and Engels had until a short time before held those very same views, but also because Hess, now under the intellectual sway of Marx, was in the process of eagerly adopting the latter's conception of the primacy of economics and the class struggle.

With the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, close cooperation between Marx and Hess ceased altogether. While Hess would always recognize in Marx a superior mind, he had for some time been shocked by his ruthlessness. ("By nature," he once wrote to Marx, "you are too schismatic, while I perhaps am too conciliatory.") As for Marx and Engels, they came increasingly to see Hess as a figure of contempt—to be despised, ridiculed, pitied, or viewed with suspicion, as the occasion demanded. In 1863, for example, Marx reacted typically to the news that Hess had joined Lassalle in his campaign to organize the German workers:

> Lassalle is gathering together our departed party friends of twenty years ago in his dung factory from which he hopes to manure World History. . . . O Ikey, O Ikey, what do you think you are up to, hanging yourself with the help of Herwegh and Moses Hess.

Hess's influence upon the course of Marxism thus ends in 1848; his further appearances in Marx's biography were of secondary significance. Fourteen years later, in 1862, Hess published *Rome and Jerusalem*, his first public profession of faith as a "Zionist," and his only remembered work. But though the book is generally regarded today, with Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation* and Herzl's *Jewish State*, as one of the three major classics of early Zionist thinking—albeit the most idiosyncratic of them—it did not begin to exert a real influence until the turn of the century, some forty years after publication.* By then, the term "Zionist," which had not been in use in Hess's time, had come into currency and it was clear that *Rome and Jerusalem* had anticipated the basic ideas of the Zionist movement.

THE central tenet of the book is Hess's rejection of the belief that civil liberties alone could promise the Jews security. The emancipation of the Jews, he maintained, was not really deeply rooted in Western Europe and especially not in Germany, where hostility toward them, until now justified by religious arguments, was, in fact, a symptom of implacable racial hatred. "The Geman," Hess wrote, "hates the Jewish religion less than the race; he objects less to the Jews' peculiar beliefs than to their peculiar noses." The leaders of the Jewish enlightenment movement, and of Reform Judaism, he continued, were betraying their past when they asserted that Judaism was merely a religion and denied that the Jews had a national identity: "The Jew in exile who denies his nationality will never earn the respect of the nations among whom he dwells." Accordingly, only a return to Palestine and the reestablishment of a Jewish state there would bring the Jewish people back to health: "With the Jews . . . all political and social progress must necessarily . . . be preceded by national independence." As Hess envisioned the Jewish state, its population would come mainly from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and its capital would derive mainly from the West. But in addition to Jewish capital, Jewish labor, and Jewish talent, of which "there was no lack," the support of a Great Power for the protection of the settlers was essential. For this support, which he had no doubt could be won, Hess turned to France: "It is to the interest of France to see that the road leading to India and China should be set-

*A partial Hebrew translation appeared in the late 1880's, while the second German edition did not come out until 1899.

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tled by a people which will be loyal to the cause of France to the end." No wonder that Herzl, upon discovering *Rome and Jerusalem* for the first time in 1901, should have noted in his diary that "everything we have been trying to do has already been written by Hess."

In fact, though, Hess was regarded as their own less by Herzl and his close lieutenants than by the adherents of the form of socialist Zionism associated with Nahman Syrkin, who in 1901 established the Moses Hess society or, as it was known, Hessiana. Syrkin saw in Hess something of the prophet; what he cherished most in *Rome and Jerusalem* was Hess's description of the return of the Jews to Palestine as a "messianic act," a step toward the creation of a new world based upon moral foundations. In his own writings, Syrkin had demanded that the Jews build up Palestine along fully socialist lines and he found this same plea in *Rome and Jerusalem*. For Syrkin, as for Hess, the Return to Palestine was to be seen as the culminating act of a martyr race; after two thousand years the Jewish people was now being called upon to breathe new life into its biblical code of ethics and thus to play its part in the redemption of mankind. The colonization of Palestine was to be a reassertion of the national will. This voluntaristic philosophy was in strong contradiction to the Marxist determinism and class-war theory of Borhokov, the other leading ideologist of socialist Zionism in Russia. Yet by the 1920's it had become an integral part of the credo of Berl Katznelson and David Ben Gurion, the most influential leaders of the *Yishuv* in Palestine during that period.

THE fact that Hess has two claims to fame, the one as a partner in the philosophical transition from Hegel to Marx, the other as a precursor of Zionism, encourages one-sided portrayals of the man. For George Lukacs, writing as a good Leninist in 1926, Hess was a shadowy figure who passed fleetingly across the stage of history in the 1840's, only to disappear forever into the wings. Less understandable is the fact that John Weiss, in his otherwise excellent monograph, decided not even to mention *Rome and Jerusalem*. At the other extreme is the view implicit in Martin Buber's sensitive essay in which Hess is portrayed as a prodigal son, who, returning to his people after many years of error, renounced his earlier Marxist socialism with relief. And this view is carried to the point of caricature in Mary Schulman's recent biography.*

Within a brief compass, Mrs. Schulman has given a lively description both of Hess's unified vision—in which history, nature, and the universe are all part of one organic and purposeful development—and of his declaration of faith in *Rome and Jerusalem*. But her account of his relationship to the German socialist movement is superficial and her attempts to disassociate Hess from Marx lead her far off course. We are told, for instance, that "after the failure of the 1848 revolution, Hess severed himself from his fellow socialists and began to occupy himself with the wave of anti-Semitism that had followed in the wake of reaction." Hess was, in fact, taken up with a new interest during the 1850's—an interest in the natural sciences—but there seems no reason whatever to believe that that interest had any connection with anti-Semitism. And in any case, it is clear that Hess never severed his links with German socialism. At his death in 1875, a number of German socialist leaders were on hand to pay him rich tribute, while the leaders of European Jewry, with the exception of Graetz, either ignored the event or else used it as an occasion to deal a parting blow to a man they deemed an irresponsible outcast.

FOR Hess, socialism and nationalism were always integrally connected—the nation, or the proletariat within the nation, was the instrument, and socialism was the goal. In his unrivalled biography (published in Germany in 1921, and since translated into Hebrew but so far, unfortunately, not into English) Theodor Zlocisti recognized that these two strands in Hess's thought were tightly interwoven. So, too, did Sir Isaiah Berlin in his Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture, which presents us with an integrated and fascinating picture of Hess as an unwavering exponent of a moralistic, non-determinist, non-violent—hence anti-Marxist—philosophy. This view of Hess as self-sufficient, but meek, is also implicit in Sir Isaiah's comparison of his personality with that of Dostoevsky's Prince Myshkin.

IT IS true that there was much of the mystic in Hess, and yet, in reality, he lacked that single-mindedness which often accompanies mysticism. He was a man easily influenced and easily disheartened, a man of sudden enthusiasms, lonely, dependent on others for leadership. Always on the verge of poverty, he was constantly on the move, from Paris to Cologne, from Cologne to Brussels, from Brussels to Breslau or to Berlin. In 1846, he was thinking of joining a communal settlement in Texas; some years later, he was hoping to accompany Graetz on a journey to Palestine; in 1859 he wrote to Napoleon III, offering his aid in the coming war of Italian liberation against Austria. Nor was his domestic life any more stable. His family had never accepted his sudden marriage to Sybil Pritsch, a prostitute whom he had set out to reform, and on his extended visits to the family home in Cologne he left her behind in Paris. He knew France as well as he did Germany and, like Heine, felt more at ease there; at the same time, he was as familiar with the world of traditional Judaism (which he had come to know well in the home of his grandfather, a rabbi by training, though not by profession) as with that of the radical Left—and he felt the pull of both. Not a strong character, he had no stomach for political in-fighting, so that, for instance, when Marx arrived in Cologne in 1848, Hess promptly de-

Moses Hess: Prophet of Zionism (Thomas Yoseloff, 1963).

Other works cited in this essay are: Georg Lukacs, *Moses Hess und die Probleme der idealistischen Dialektik* (Leipzig, 1926); John Weiss, *Moses Hess, Utopian Socialist*, Wayne University Press, 1960; Martin Buger, "The First of the Last: on MOSES HESS," from *Israel and Palestine: The History of an Idea* Farrar, Straus & Young, 1952; Theodor Zlocisti, *Moses Hess, der Vorkämpfer des Sozialismus und Zionismus 1812-1875* (Berlin, 1921); Isaiah Berlin, *The Life and Opinions of Moses Hess* (Cambridge, 1959).

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parted for Paris. Yet while lacking both the stamina and the organizational gifts that go into the making of a politician, he was willing to enter into ideological debate, and on various occasions during the late 1860's, he took issue forcefully with Herzen (to whom he recommended Marx's refutation of Proudhon), with Geiger, and with Bakunin who replied to the argument with a wealth of anti-Semitic abuse. Yet for all his dislike of Marx's methods, Hess seldom attacked Marx publicly, and after Lassalle's death in 1864, he drifted back into the Marx-Engels milieu.

In attempting some ultimate evaluation of Hess's career, one can say, I think, that he remained true throughout to the broad outlines of his earliest vision—of a monistic and purposeful historical development that would culminate in the ideal egalitarian society. If he was never too precise about how this vision was to be realized, it may have been because in his thinking about the immediate future, he was open to too many influences; his antennae were always receptive. Yet it was probably that very restlessness, and his acute sensitivity, combined with his constant shifts from one place and one culture to another, that enabled Hess to achieve his moments of political influence and of astonishing insight.

IT WAS he more than anyone else who had urged the Left Hegelians to leave their studies and to look for themselves at life in the Manchester factories. It was he who first showed Marx around Paris, with particular emphasis on its large working-class districts and revolutionary cafés. And he was among the first to recognize Marx's genius, writing as early as 1842: "Imagine Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel all fused in one person—and I mean fused, not lumped together, and you have Marx." And in spite of their later quarrels he never went back on that judgment.

Again, in 1863, when Marx and Engels, for example, were reluctant to lend a hand, Hess participated enthusiastically (if briefly) in Lassalle's campaign to organize the German workers in the fight for full voting rights. At the same time, his imagination was fired by the first volumes of Graetz's monumental *History of the Jews*, and its assumption, so unlike that of the earlier products of Germany's "science of Judaism," that the past of the Jewish people demanded a national future. He even undertook to translate and edit the first edition of *Graetz's Sinai and Golgotha*, which was published in France in 1867. "The work has been wonderfully improved by you," Graetz wrote to him in acknowledgment. And in *Rome and Jerusalem*, Hess anticipated such diverse Jewish thinkers as Dubnow, Scholem, Buber, Peretz, and Berdichevski, seeing in Hasidism not a morass of medieval superstition, but a world that concealed within itself rich treasures of poetry and moral strength.

Though always acutely conscious of the importance not only of class, but also of national, divisions, he was not bound by preconception or dogma in his estimate of the European nations. He saw that the reappearance on the political stage of two of the great ancient peoples, first Greece, then Rome, could serve as a signal to the third, the Jews. He gradually came to fear German nationalism, until that fear almost overshadowed his life-long terror of Russian expansion, so that the wildly enthusiastic German patriot of the 1830's—he had loved to sing Becker's national hymn, "They shall not possess it, the free German Rhine!"—could write in 1859 that "the nearsighted fanaticism of Germanism will probably win out and have resort to the 'German sword.' And its eventual fate will be to fall into the pit which it is now digging for its neighbors who are supposedly thirsting for conquest." This man who, in the mid-1840's, together with Marx, was condemning the Jews as a race of shopkeepers doomed to speedy disappearance, could proclaim in 1862 that "every Jew, even the converted, should cling to the cause and labor for the regeneration of Israel."

A former fellow of the Russian Institue at Columbia, JONATHAN FRANKEL, *a new contributor, teaches at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has written for the* Slavic Review *and the* Cambridge Review.

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AGAINST INTERPRETATION. By SUSAN SONTAG. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 304 pp. $4.95*

Reviewed by ALICIA OSTRIKER

ONCE UPON a time, the temptation of intellect was to overreach. Faustus, to feed the greed of an archetypically aspiring mind, sacrificed his kinship with mankind and his immortal soul. He wanted to know too much. In the 20th century, intellect seems to be faced with a different temptation: suicide by immersion. Twentieth-century intellectuals have often been converts—to Marxism, to Freudianism of one brand or another, to Catholicism—to some doctrine which has intellectual appeal and at the same time saves the convert from isolated despair by uniting him with the Workers or History or Science or the Church. Once safely converted, he can go on thinking and writing, but he no longer questions premises.

For minds trained in the arts and humanities, conversion at present takes the form of hitching on to cultural modernity. "Elitecult" and/or "popcult" become salvation. In the name of free thought and free feeling, the wishful intellectual sells out to get In. After that, comes the expounding of the Cause.

THE chief commodity of Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation,* according to its author and her reviewers, is a modern sensibility. Stress the modernity here, since she is distinguished less by a decided or passionate point of view (compare her as a film critic, for example, with two such disparate personalities as James Agee and Kenneth Tynan) than by an eagerness to explore anything new. At times this eagerness lapses deliberately into inarticulateness, as in her celebrated essay on Camp, which will probably be unintelligible in ten years. At its best—for example in the essay on Happenings—it reports immediate emotions unpretentiously and sensitively. But sensitive people are a dime a dozen. The rarer gift Miss Sontag has to offer is brains. The theoretical portions of her book are delightful to read because she can argue so well. Even when she fudges her argument with standby ploys like name-calling, the shifted definition, the straw man, or the historical distortion, she does it with the skill of an expert. Her literary and philosophical references are broad and applied with originality. Her ideas are consistently stimulating, particularly when they do not get in the way of her major theoretical premise—as in the little essay "Piety Without Content," where she uses the analogy of political fellow-traveling to destroy, beautifully, the rosy idea of common-denominator religiousness.

For all that, however, her major premise is that brains are bankrupt. This is explicit in the snide comments about "philistinism" and about the bad effects on culture of "people with minds," in the vague asides about "magic" in art, in the preferences for non-verbal over verbal art, in the insistence that we need more feeling and less thought. It is implicit everywhere in her refusal to carry any line of reasoning through to the end. Finally, it cripples her attempt to develop "case studies for an aesthetic" (her own description of her intention) because an aesthetic is an intellectual thing.

What Miss Sontag wants to encourage, in art and criticism, is respect for sensuous surfaces, for feeling, for form, for style. What she apparently wants to encourage in real life is respect for the unconventional, the amoral, the extreme sensation, be it sensuous gratification or madness. So far so good. Anybody who does Freudian criticism or looks for morals in art, or whose vision is directed only toward what is happy, healthy and prudent, needs this book. But it is not enough to offer a corrective to such people.

Miss Sontag, seems to think it is enough, perhaps because she has despaired of the possibility that artists, critics, or the public can use their minds to create new syntheses of matter and manner, good and evil, health and insanity. She shares, perhaps, in a popular and anti-rationalist superstition according to which intelligence has not only failed to solve the problems of mankind, but is also indirectly responsible for getting us into our contemporary fix with the Gog and Magog of alienation and the bomb.

A JUSTER approach might blame the contemporary fix, insofar as it is temporary and not a permanent human condition, on too little exercise of intelligence, not too much. Similarly, the cure for the "steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience," if it is indeed due to "a culture based on excess, on overproduction . . . material plenitude . . . sheer crowdedness," is surely not more pure objects. Miss Sontag advises us "to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more." We might try instead to understand what we see, hear and feel. As a white knight of art, Miss Sontag is in danger of wounding the creature she wants to save.

The sensuous bias of such criticism has severe limitations. It is so preoccupied with what we presumably need that it is ready to throw out a lot of what we can get. It asserts that we don't need "content"; but "content" is precisely what most verbal and much visual art, and even much music, from Buxtehude to Beethoven to the blues, ultimately depends on. Such criticism cautions that some arts are too prone to interpretation; of course they are: so is anything interesting. Because pedants flourish,

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shall we have no more cakes and ale? Reminding us to remember that *Hamlet* is about Hamlet, Miss Sontag omits the fact that Hamlet is importantly distinguihsed from Joe Schmoe because he "contains" a pattern of human behavior which is both permanent and significant. Jeering at psychoanalytical, religious, and sociological interpretations of Kafka because they can't all be right, she neglects to observe that they all may be relevant, and that Kafka's genius may lie precisely in his ability to perform a psychoanalytic study *and* a study of bureaucracy *and* a religious manifesto in a single fantastic fable.

Obviously it makes a difference what writers say. It makes a difference what painters say, whether they choose to paint "about" virgins and children, the disasters of war, or the harmonies and cacophonies of colors. Miss Sontag's kind of criticism fails to understand that great artists may want to change our lives by changing our vision; that Socrates would not have been content for Alcibiades to follow him around awestruck but still corrupt; that the only complete response to a work of art is to have one's life changed by it, to create or become another work of art, to see visions like Dante and Blake, or to become incredibly flexible, comprehensive, and compassionate like Shakespeare.

This insufficiency of response spoils some brilliant analyses. For example, in her essays on Pavese and Simone Weil, Miss Sontag acknowledges the keen fascination for us of literary suffering, self-flagellation, obsession, and martyrdom. She sets them in historical perspective (the artist as sufferer replacing the Christian martyr) and poses them against psychological normality as being in some ways more intense, more exemplary. Yet instead of suggesting that the importance of the abnormal passions demands some shift of our own psychological center of gravity—some awareness at least of our own potential abnormalities, if not an acting out of them—she falls back on uplift. She asserts her assurance that "the sane view of life is the true one." Which sane view? How does she know? Suppose it isn't? And she declares that without any intention of imitating a Simone Weil or believing for a minute in her doctrines, we should "pay our respects" and be "moved" by Weil's "level of spiritual reality." So the contemplation of aesthetic surfaces brings us back to the old inspirational line of vicarious thrills and vicarious morality.

Another problem of sensuous modern criticism is that it gives minor artists too much credit. Many of the styles and authors Miss Sontag admires, like Surrealism, Pop, Happenings, Genet, Peter Weiss in *Marat/Sade*, can be classified as representing what Coleridge called Secondary Imagination, or Fancy, as opposed to the Primary Imagination. That is, they are works of combination and juxtaposition, not of synthesis. In dripping watches in the desert, in Campbell's soup cans in the Modern Museum, in baby dolls glued to machine parts, in black people playing white people, in "discussions of the deepest issues of contemporary morality and history" used as "decor, props, sensuous material," we see artists having ironic fun, fooling around with things. There is nothing wrong with this, until fooling tries to impose itself on all other possibilities. Miss Sontag declares that "the most interesting works of contemporary art are adventures in sensation, new 'sensory mixes.'" Well, maybe so. In that case, our era resembles the latter half of the 18th century, which Coleridge found unsatisfactory because it contained no first-rate unifying, synthesizing imagination. In retrospect, it seems that most late 18th-century artists were trying to escape from a classical aesthetic that no longer compelled belief, but didn't know where they wanted to get to. Hence the proliferation of sentimental junk about graves and peasants and mountain landscapes; hence also, perhaps, second-rate pornography like *Fanny Hill*. There may be more similarity than meets the eye between 18th-century picturesque, and 20th-century grotesque, adventures in sensation.

IN HER final essay, "One Culture and the New Sensibility," Miss Sontag claims that this art is experimental in the same sense that science is: cool, rational, etc. But scientific experiment has as its assumption the real existence of facts and laws, and as its object the synthesis of principles or "models" which will resolve old paradoxes, which will incorporate all that is known, which will be simpler and more inclusive than anything thought earlier. So does some art; we are deceived if we sell our birthright to it for the mess of pottage in some new sensuous mix.

And, in fact, there is no reason to do so. Consider the films of Godard, Resnais, Antonioni, sometimes Bergman, who'll present surfaces impervious to the arrows of psychology. These films do not tells us why characters act as they do, and they don't let us ask—or else they tease us with false starts if we do ask. They portray us simplified, floating like particles in random motion without cause or purpose through landscapes or cityscapes which mean nothing to us, performing hopeless acts of love with people who mean nothing to us, dancing through simulacra of attempts to recapture or discover . . . and ending in violent death or indolent vacuum. All these films are in various ways about the experience of having no motivation, no will. If we reject interpretation, we can stop here, with the sensuous texture of such experience. Another alternative, however, is to integrate the ominous tidings with what we know already about states of existence in which motivation *can* be said to exist, and see if any more comprehensive truth appears. Are these states of missing will peripheral to human nature, representing some arrested development or degeneration? Or are they central? Is lack of will a step on the way to will, or vice-versa? Modern physics and philosophy reject the very notion of causality, a notion originally tied to theism. They discover, instead, typical patterns of events. The art of today also points toward discoveries to come; it demands new models of the human condition. This art, which is the music played in the silence of God, is prone to interpretation. Why not interpret it?

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BEFORE THE BEGINNING

AT THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION: A BACKGROUND OF BIBLICAL HISTORY. Edited by E. A. SPEISER. *Rutgers University Press. 388 pp. $17.50* (THE WORLD HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, FIRST SERIES: ANCIENT TIMES. General editor B. NETANYAHU. *Jewish History Publications Ltd.*)

Reviewed by ERICH ISAAC

THIS IS the first volume of a projected "all-inclusive" and "authoritative history of the Jewish people from its beginning to the present time." Each of the volumes is to follow the plan of the first in offering a series of essays by eminent scholars relating to the central theme of the book—in this case the environmental and cultural setting for the birth of ancient Israel. One cannot take issue with the conception and intention of the work. From time to time, it is probably important to undertake an exhaustive history, and it is especially appropriate to venture on a comprehensive *Jewish* history at this particular juncture, after a cataclysm which seems to render inadequate all the various perspectives in which the Jewish past has been viewed. I feel certain that a project of this scope was not embarked upon simply out of the desire to bring new historiographic methods to bear upon previously available material, or even to present new materials, but that a deeper need was felt for taking stock. But while concurring in the desirability of the endeavor, I can only lament that it is off to so poor a start.

In the preface, B. Netanyahu, who is the general editor of the entire series, explains that in planning the overall strategy of the project, the editorial committee studied previous works of similarly comprehensive scope—such as the Cambridge Historical Series, Hanotaux's *Histoire de la Nation Française*, Menéndez Pidal's *Historia de España* and Oncken's *Allgemeine Geschichte*—in order to determine both their strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, this first volume at least, of *The World History of the Jewish People* stands as testimony to a common experience: it is possible to be aware of all pitfalls, take note of all methodological and conceptual problems, study past attempts at solutions and analyze their failings, and yet in the end produce something which contains many of the very defects one has so painstakingly identified in other works.

THERE WAS, to be sure, a special problem in structuring the first volume: it deals with a period in which there are as yet no Jews, though there is a land that will become Jewish by the time volume II is reached, and there are various peoples, a few of whom will become Jewish, and most of whom will continue to create their own civilizations. The task, therefore, is to provide the perspective for understanding the subsequent emergence of ancient Israel. But the method chosen for this purpose works very badly: the editor farmed out individual areas to acknowledged experts, apparently with the simple instruction to write-so-and-so many words about the flora, or so-and-so many words about the climate. One cannot, it must be admitted, quarrel with the choice of experts: H. Polotsky takes Semitics, William F. Albright prehistory, M. Avnimelech geology, F. Simon Bodenheimer fauna, John A. Wilson Egypt, etc. Yet what these eminent scholars have produced is a series of uneven essays which fail to address themselves to the fundamental and really interesting questions: what led to the development of the remarkable complex of early high civilization in the Near East?; and within this civilization, what led to the birth of Israel? It may well be that these questions, and the other questions they imply, cannot be answered satisfactorily, but they must nonetheless be raised. Was the Near Eastern neolithic an entirely local and independent achievement, or do its roots lie far to the north and/or south? Whatever else the ancient Near East represented, it was also an enclave of plow-using farmers whose economy, in which domestic plants and animals were functionally integrated, constituted a true peasant complex. Northward,

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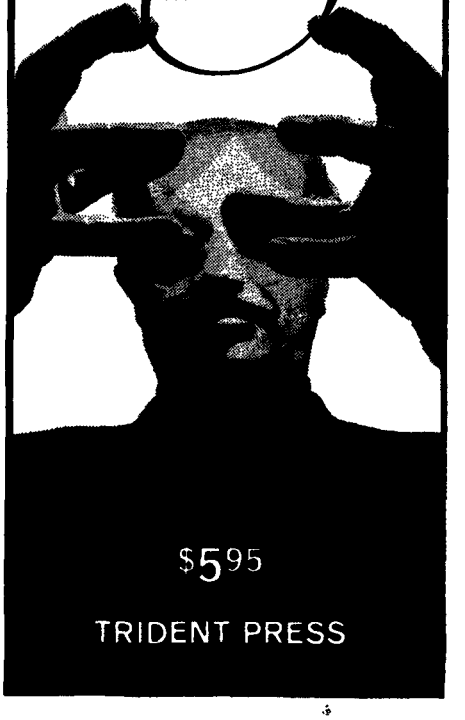

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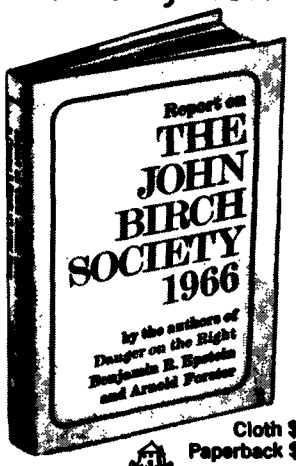

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deep into Eurasia, extended pastoral nomadic regions, and to the south, beyond an intermediate pastoral zone, there was a large zone of tropical cultivation. It is only recently that this pattern has begun to be modified.

There are those who argue that agriculture was invented in the Near East, and that the specialized herding patterns of Eurasia and the cultivation system of the tropics thus represent later specializations. Others, however, contend that the mere fact that the oldest *known* evidence for domestication and farming is to be found in the Near East is no proof of priority in time, and that the cultural upsurge took place because the area was a contact zone between a much older nomadic realm and a realm of tropical cultivation.

The investigation of this question involves the whole problem of cultural diffusion, which is largely neglected in this volume. It is, to be sure, a difficult problem. For one thing, it is hard to identify objects and traits which originated outside the area under study, but which have undergone such modifications or changes of function that they appear as a local achievement. Then, too, it is only to be expected that archaeologists will tend to confine their attention to their own sites and thus remain unaware of the relationships between their local discoveries and those found in remote places. Finally, there is a danger in emphasizing cultural diffusion as well as in neglecting it. That danger consists in connecting the artifacts of long-dead cultures with similar ones found in present-day primitive cultures, and too facilely ascribing the conditions of the latter to the former.

Nevertheless, the evidence for cultural dispersal from earliest times on is overwhelming. There are astounding congruences in such items as plastered and modeled shell-eyed skulls found at Jericho, in Anatolia, in the interior of New Guinea and in the Marquesas. In the past, these similarities have often been dogmatically treated as independent creations of a human psyche that is everywhere equally constituted (although the reverse—that cultural dissimilarities prove the unequal character of the human psyche—is never argued). But, as Gräbner observed, independent inventions cannot be proved; connections can.

QUITE APART from its failure to deal with these issues, *At the Dawn of Civilization* is unsatisfactory even within its own limited framework. Although the volume is expensive and lavishly produced, the text itself is not long. Within a comparatively brief space, it attempts to cover Near-Eastern prehistory, the rise of Egypt, and the evolution of the integrated civilization of Mesopotamia. Such a presentation entails a more than ordinary need for careful selectivity. It certainly should leave no room for scholarly polemics that can be comprehended only by those who have themselves inhaled the dust of Shanidar, Jarmo, and Teleilat-el-Ghassul for years; yet that is precisely what is necessary for understanding some of these essays. Thus it becomes difficult to determine the audience to which the book is directed. The essay on prehistory by Albright, for example, is a summary by one expert telling other experts where he stands on such questions as whether the Zarzian of Kurdistan is related to Miss Garrod's Lower Natufian, or to the Kebaran, as Howell maintained. This is fascinating for the specialist, but more appropriate for a professional journal. And one is puzzled as to what to make of information such as that offered in Dov Ashbel's chapter on climate: "On a summer's day the daily mean of radiation received on a square meter of horizontal surface is about 7½ million gram calories; on a bright winter's day it is about 3 million gram calories, whilst on a dull overcast day it is no more than 0.7-1 million gram calories." Conceivably, such facts are relevant to the dawn of civilization in the Near East, but what their relevance might be is not made clear. Perhaps the dawn was on a bright day? Climatic change, on the other hand, an important and highly relevant subject, is not even discussed. And the chapters included under the topic, "environmental

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setting"—notably those on geomorphology, geology, flora, fauna—as well as the regional sections on Syria and Mesopotamia, so entirely fail to focus on the main subject of the book as to be no more than encyclopedia entries.

Moreover, the book perpetuates a regrettable convention of historians in that it provides introductory sections on geographic background which are not integrated with the material that follows them. The assumption seems to be that once the "geographic setting" has been described, geography can be put aside while history takes over. Surely this assumption should have been abandoned at least as long ago as Bernard Varenius, for the land is not static but reflects the cumulative impact of its interaction with life. As Peter Heylyn wrote in 1621: "Geographie without Historie hath life and motion, but at randome and unstable. Historie without Geographie, like a dead carkasse, hath neither life nor motion at all."

The absence of any maps worthy of the name is inexcusable in a book of this purpose, makeup, and price. The primitive sketches one does find are not keyed to the text and sometimes they are actually absurd. Thus, Alexandria appears on a location "map" of "Ancient Egypt"; Jericho sits on the Dead Sea; the Red Sea is shown with its modern coast line, not as it was, reaching in the northwest to the Bitter Lakes; the upper course of the Litani is reversed to flow into the Orontes; there are no indications of scale, longitude, or latitude; most of the numerous archaeological sites of Syria and Mesopotamia to which the text refers are not even shown. With all these defects, it is perhaps superfluous to complain about the lack of morphology and soil maps to show such things as the progress of salinization in Mesopotamia.

NEVERTHELESS, *At the Dawn of Civilization* is by no means a total disaster; there are individual chapters which are very good. Indeed, the essays in Parts Two and Three on "Ethno-linguistics" and "The Cultural Factor" are for the most part excellent. Professors Speiser and Wilson have described the evolu-

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tion of Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilization compactly and comprehensively; both of them provide something of the holistic approach so sadly missing in other parts of the volume. The excellence of these sections makes it all the more evident that the basic failure is an editorial one.

There are still many volumes and many years before *The World History of the Jewish People* will come to an end. (Indeed, at the rate these things progress, the end of the Jewish people and/or of world history may come before all the volumes are written.) The problem of focus which has beset the first volume should not be so crucial in later volumes, when the Jews will provide the focus. Thus there is still ground for hope that this series will become a significant contribution to history.

DEATH TRAPS

UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED. By RALPH NADER. *Grossman Publishers. 365 pp. $5.95.*

SAFETY LAST. By JEFFREY O'CONNELL and ARTHUR MYERS. *Random House. 226 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by HARVEY SWADOS

PERHAPS THE most far-reaching consequence of the mass media, and the one of which we have yet to see the end, is their trivialization of all human experience. For *Life* Magazine, *Marat/Sade* equals the comic strip *Superman* (vibrant/volatile). For TV, Vietnam equals Clairol. Courage means an ABC executive resigning in protest against four commercials on *Batman*—instead of the customary three. Trivialization takes over even in the style of contemporary muckraking, and in the subjects raked over. Sixty years after Upton Sinclair's assault upon Armour, poisonous meat, and exploited packinghouse workers, the New York *Times* unleashes Craig Claiborne to expose the lukewarm food and sloppy service of elegant restaurants—boldly named, but so ridiculously priced that most readers would never set foot in them even if Mr. Claiborne were to faint with delight at their cuisine.

For some time, trivializers have turned their attention to the automobile, partly because one out of every five retail dollars in this country is spent for automotive products, and partly because the minute differences between body shells of American automobiles are being interpreted, emphasized, advertised, as indicators of status, sexiness, and hip. Some of the trivializers work within the industry, consciously and steadily distracting attention from function; others work within the mass media, glorifying the new brutes of each model season or, even when they ridicule them, distracting attention from their horror, or from the fact that there is any horror other than the consequences of their careless use.

What is the true horror? These two books disclose its dimensions. It must be said at once, however, that the O'Connell-Myers book, while it is the more recently published, contains virtually nothing that cannot be found, more thoroughly and thoughtfully discussed, in the Nader book. Where it does diverge in interpretation, its version of history seems shaky when compared with Nader's. Thus, O'Connell-Myers:

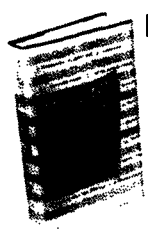
> . . . Ford dropped the safety approach like a hot piston when it found that it didn't sell. Ford's sales had dropped disastrously and in August of 1956 no further mention of safety was to be found in Ford's advertising. Whether it was the safety approach that was the albatross, or a combination of factors, is still argued in Detroit, but it's common knowledge in Grosse Pointe that safety doesn't sell.

Whereas, Nader:

> Ford terminated its safety campaign in the spring of 1956 after an internal struggle won by those who agreed with the General Motors analysis of the probably unsettling consequences of a vehicle safety campaign. The 1956 Ford finished second to Chevrolet in sales, but its failure to be number one had nothing to do with the Ford safety campaign. Even so, it has since been cited to prove that "safety doesn't sell."

Though their hearts are in the right place, O'Connell and Myers have organized their chapters badly and titled them vulgarly ("For He Driveth Furiously," etc.), and written up their material in excited, sports-page vernacular that can, once again, only distract and titillate us. There is really no reason to suffer through their souped-up prose when the Nader volume is available.

To Mr. Nader, then. We have reason to be grateful, for once, to General Motors. By hiring detectives to trail, harass, and spy upon this young attorney and consultant in an effort to find something in his private life that would discredit his devastating analysis of their product, they have had themselves hauled before a Senate committee, forced to apologize publicly, and thus brought Mr. Nader's book to the attention of millions who



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But suppose it were to be incontrovertibly demonstrated that the automobile as presently designed is a death trap, and not simply because of the powerful engine under its hood. Suppose it were to be demonstrated that it has been possible for some time to mass-produce an automobile in which the occupants could not only survive, but be relatively unaffected by collisions at speeds of up to forty miles per hour (most accident victims are killed at slower speeds, upon impact within the car in which they are trapped: the "second collision").

This is what Mr. Nader, by careful research and analysis, demonstrates with harrowing precision. But this was already the achievement of engineers, physicians, scientists, and politicians before him. Among the politicians we should salute former Congressman Kenneth Roberts of Alabama and New York State Senator Edward Speno. Among the scientists, such genuine heroes as "crackpot" Hugh de Haven, physician-physicist Colonel John Paul Stapp, United States Air Force, and Professor James Ryan of the University of Minnesota—all of whom risked their own lives in collision-impact experiments. What Mr. Nader has done—and quite brilliantly—is to bring these together in well-organized and highly readable form. He has also done some-

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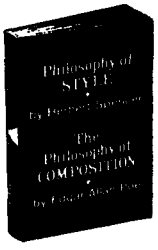

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thing quite beyond the grasp of those who write excitedly or ironically about "insolent chariots." He has reminded us that this takes place in the context of a society in which men who rise to the top by persisting in the production of vehicles known to be dangerously designed, far from being prosecuted, are seen as logical occupants of the office of Secretary of Defense. Men like Charles E. Wilson and Robert McNamara are presumed to have proven their ability to plan policy for the nation by their previous success in identifying rationality with corporate profit based on proliferation of senseless and dangerous gadgetry, and irrationality with the belief that human beings ought to have precedence over quantities.

THE Chevrolet Corvair was known by engineers to be an unstable car at the time it was introduced, in 1959. From then until now, it is estimated that perhaps ten thousand lives have been lost in it because of its suspension and handling hazards; and the lawsuits continue. Nader writes, "It took General Motors four years of the model and 1,124,076 Corvairs before they decided to do something for all unsuspecting Corvair buyers by installing standard equipment to help control the car's handling hazards." It is scarcely an exaggeration to characterize this as "one of the greatest acts of industrial irresponsibility in the present century," or to observe that it is "a syndrome of a much deeper malaise that radiates beyond corporate borders and into society."

General Motors, which dominates the automotive industry and in consequence American life, in a way that is almost unimaginable to most of us, is in turn dominated by men who have not wished to make their product safer, but have preferred instead to conceal its horror from public examination by placing the blame elsewhere, on drivers, on drink, on highways, anywhere but on the murder weapon itself. (In the words of anatomist-consultant Dr. Donald Huelke, the few safety engineers function in the auto industry as "almost a fifth column.")

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*David Daiches, COMMENTARY, September 1965

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These men have created a monster not because they are monsters—although they must bear the responsibility for hundreds of thousands of deaths—but because they themselves are both true believers and captives of a system in which the engineer's authority over design has been eliminated. It has been delegated completely to the socially and ethically irresponsible stylist, whose function "has been designated by automobile company top management as *the* prerequisite for maintaining the annual high volume of automobile sales—no small assignment in an industry that has a volume of at least twenty billion dollars every year."

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Along with his warning that the American economy "is being distorted by tendencies strikingly similar to those that operate in one-crop economies" goes Mr. Nader's understanding that the distortion is the result not of a conspiracy (despite the lies, the lobbying, the shadowing, the hiding) but rather of unchecked greed and wretched narrowness of vision. As he says of the traffic safety establishment, which is not merely subsidized, but run by the industry, "This establishment is not a conspiracy; it does not have to be . . . it has been more like a great power with no challengers."

THANKS TO Mr. Nader's coldly impassioned challenge, one begins to realize that these swollen corporations have stifled creative engineering even while they have encouraged and in fact insisted upon the most appalling mediocrity among their executives. Is it strange that these foolish and cowardly men should have so much blood on their hands? Is it strange that men should regard themselves as useful members of society when they save

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money for their employer by specifying dangerously inadequate tires on their new automobiles? Or steering wheels which splinter into javelins to thrust through the fragile human breast? It is to Mr. Nader's honor that he is a true subversive, forcing us to reconsider the values shared by corporation and society—and, to a greater or lesser extent, by all of us.

Now, after over a million deaths, the roadways of our daily lives so spattered with blood and viscera that we avert our eyes, sickened, as we pass, it is the turn of the automobile to submit to government safety standards previously imposed in turn upon the steamboat, the locomotive, the airplane. If we are fortunate enough to have men like Ralph Nader vigilantly watchful to ensure that the corporations do not smother and envelop the legislators as they have the executive (the President's Committee for Traffic Safety is nothing more than a creature of General Motors), then we shall have automobiles fit for our children to drive in, not to die in.

Then, too, we shall have the opportunity to explore fully, and thus begin to cope, with what Mr. Nader has been keen enough to outline: the intimacy of the relationship between trivialization (such as the minute differentiations between automotive death traps) and the priorities which our society will assign, on the one hand to the preservation and enrichment of human life, on the other, to its destruction.

DREAM OF VIOLENCE

THE PAINTED BIRD. By JERZY KOSINSKI. *Houghton Mifflin. 272 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by NEIL COMPTON

DURING the Second World War, it sometimes seemed as though the scale of the conflict and the brute impersonality of mechanized warfare had numbed the creative faculties. There was plenty of journalism, but little imaginative literature. "Where are the war poets?" was always good for a couple of thousand petulant or hortatory

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By CHARLES Y. GLOCK and RODNEY STARK

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In sharp contrast to the Vatican Council's statement exonerating the Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus, this study discloses that the traditional views of Jewish guilt and religious inferiority continue to be widely taught in some Christian denominations. Clerical reformers have grown increasingly concerned that religious teachings do indeed provide Christians with a pious rhetoric for their contempt of Jews.

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Appendix of survey questions.

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words in the middlebrow journals; and everyone agreed that *Lili Marlene,* the war's single good song, was no match for the popular masterpieces of the Civil War or World War I.

However, the numbness soon wore off. Today, the bibliography of the war has become so enormous that it defies the efforts of anyone to master more than a fraction of it, and there is no sign that the flow of books is drying up. If we look back over the years, the pattern of publication seems to arrange itself into successive waves of genres—too many to itemize, but extending from the personal narratives of individual participants, some of which (like Richard Hillary's *The Last Enemy*) appeared during the war itself; through the classic novels of combat (*The Naked and the Dead,* 1948, and *Catch-22,* 1961, provide useful proximate terminal dates); to the scholarly and philosophical monographs, now beginning to appear, in which limited aspects of the vast and incredible story are definitively examined.

Jerzy Kosinski's brilliant and horrifying book belongs to an increasingly numerous genre which includes Miguel del Castillo's *Child of our Time* (1957) and Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959)—semi-autobiographical fictions by writers who were children during the war. Through the juxtaposition of childish innocence and the most brutal forms of fallen adult experience, such works sum up the universal trauma of war in a myth of unrivaled concentration and clarity.

At the time of the German invasion of Poland, the nameless six-year-old protagonist of *The Painted Bird* is sent by his parents to what they hope will be sanctuary in a remote and primitive eastern village. Through a series of accidents, parents and child lose touch with one another, and the little boy becomes a homeless wanderer. His isolation is intensified by the fact that he is dark, and speaks the language of urban, educated Poles. The peasants among whom he lives for four years are blonde, and speak an uncouth local dialect. They are poor, superstitious, ignorant, and suspicious; and these un-

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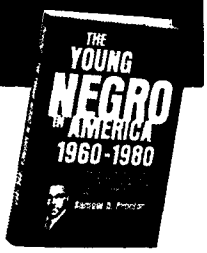

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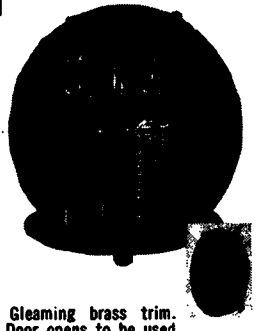

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amiable traits are exacerbated by wartime scarcities. To the peasants, a swarthy complexion denotes either Jew or Gypsy: fear of trouble with the German occupation authorities intensifies their natural antipathy toward strangers. Just over the intellectual and geographical horizons of this community are concentration camps. Trainloads of victims pass along the railroad tracks, and the forests are dotted with sinister mounds of oily ash.

THE boy's adventures have the nightmare vividness of a series of "black" fairy tales. He passes from village to village, hovel to hovel, through the hands of a grotesque series of masters and mistresses, including two witches, a sadistic miller, a mad bird-trapper, and a nymphomaniac goat-girl. He is treated with a brutality that is the more horrifying because it is so casual, and witnesses acts of perverse violence, of which this account of a husband's revenge on his wife's lover will serve for example:

> With a rapid movement such as women use to gouge out the rotten spots while peeling potatoes, he plunged the spoon into one of the boy's eyes and twisted it.
>
> The eye sprang out of his face like a yoke from a broken egg and rolled down the miller's hand onto the floor. The plowboy howled and shrieked, but the miller's hold kept him pinned against the wall. Then the blood-covered spoon plunged into the other eye, which sprang out even faster. For a moment the eye rested on the boy's cheek as if uncertain what to do next; then it finally tumbled down his shirt onto the floor.

This passage illustrates Mr. Kosinski's economical but intensely visual prose style. It is impossible to disbelieve while he is telling his story, and almost as hard to believe that the author learned to write English only after he reached maturity.

The emotional climax of the book comes when the boy stumbles and drops the missal while assisting in a celebration of the mass. Shouting "Gypsy vampire!" the outraged peasants drag him to an open manure pit and try to drown him in its stinking contents. The shock of this experience deprives him of the power of speech.

As he moves about in this dismal society, the boy gradually learns how to live in it. In spite of his memories of another way of life and the speculative cast of his intelligence, he might have sunk irretrievably to the level of the peasants if he had not been caught up in the advance of the Russian forces. After the intellectual claustrophobia of the villages, it is a relief, near the end of the book, when the boy enters the relatively free and idealistic community of the Red Army—even though his veneration of Stalin adds a note of irony to all the lofty generalizations of Gavrila, the political commissar, who befriends the child.

BUT when he is returned to the civilian authorities, and, eventually, to his parents, the boy lapses into the savagery he learned among the peasants, and does not emerge from it until after a skiing accident has restored his power of speech. At the end of the book, he has learned to distinguish between the mindless, instinctive cruelty of the peasants, and the infinitely more hateful ideological and technological savagery of the Nazis. Already feeling trapped in the collective conformity of postwar Poland, he is preparing a new flight across the ocean to a freer world in which he may again attempt to become himself.

At this point, on the last page of the book, all the doubts and reservations which I had hitherto suppressed suddenly became irresistible. In what spirit are we supposed to read *The Painted Bird*? Obviously, the story is not a literally true one. Even among the peasants of eastern Poland there must have been an occasional act of kindness; and surely several of the boy's adventures reflect adolescent and adult fantasies of sexuality rather than a child's real experience of the world.

But if the book is intended to be symbolic and poetic, the implied parallel between the cultural degradation of the peasants and the political degradation of contemporary Poland is false and trivial. This would be a minor criticism if

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it were not that the Red Army episodes also seem to suggest that the nightmare world of the villages and the daylight world of politics exist on the same plane of reality. It is a pity that the reader's natural skepticism, allayed by Mr. Kosinski's hypnotically convincing style, should be so needlessly awakened by a detail which is inessential to the book's fundamental vision. *The Painted Bird* deserves the status of a minor classic not because it documents any particular political or social abuse, but because it dramatizes and defines the dream of violence and alienation which haunts the imagination of Communists, democrats, and peasants alike in the middle of the 20th century.

SUCCESS STORY

MODERN CAPITALISM: THE CHANGING BALANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POWER. By ANDREW SHONFIELD. *Oxford University Press. 456 pp. $10.50.*

Reviewed by BERNARD D. NOSSITER

ANDREW SHONFIELD has taken a long, close look at postwar capitalism in the developed West and concluded that it has achieved a dazzling success. It has confounded the prophets of disaster, both socialists on the Left and classical liberals on the Right. It has not only avoided the cyclical traumas of the past but has built a network of movable defenses against even brief reductions in total output. It has generated a growing conviction that production and incomes can rise on an ever-ascending, if uneven, curve, and this very expectation has tended to become self-realizing. To reach this happy state, modern capitalism has thrown off much of its earlier intellectual and institutional baggage. Atomized competitive markets have been replaced by large centers of public and private economic power. These have tamed the violence of competitive swings, provided a measure of coherent decision-making and generally taken a longer view of right conduct.

The state has become a guarantor of a level of effective demand high enough to provide full and even over-full employment. A growing measure of welfare services protects those at the bottom; an unprecedented degree of self-confidence marks the decision-makers at the top. It is, of course, true that "the concentration of economic authority and the centralized planning of the use of resources which have become the characteristic instruments of dynamic postwar capitalism" have left a few unsolved problems. Perhaps the most notable among them is the political problem of the growing attenuation of popular control over the great economic institutions. But at least an ever-rising standard of material well-being is now virtually assured throughout the rich West.

Stated so baldly, Shonfield's thesis sounds uncomfortably naive. In fact, however, he is a remarkably sophisticated observer and the postwar performance generally supports the central lines of his argument. His most conspicuous failures are sins of omission: he

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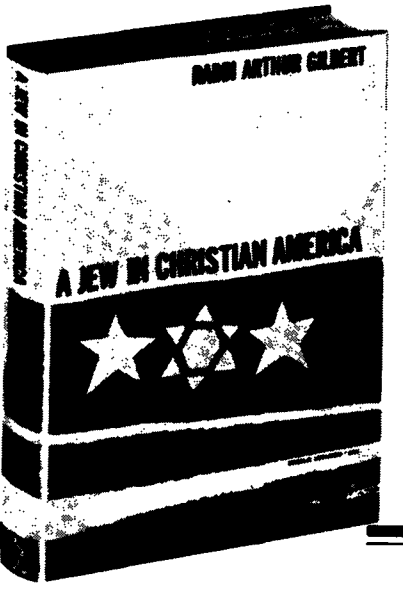
A JEW IN CHRISTIAN AMERICA

by RABBI ARTHUR GILBERT



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The hope, Rabbi Gilbert believes, rests on theology, if both Christian and Jew can come to a deeper understanding of who they are by virtue of their religious faith and commitment. For Jews and Christians alike, Rabbi Gilbert's book—filled with the insights of charity—is profoundly important reading.

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glosses over or dismisses with footnotes some of the less agreeable features of the economic landscape. For example, the expansion of welfare has not prevented a growing maldistribution of the new capitalism's fruits. While the evidence is not entirely clear, there does appear to be an increasing concentration of wealth and income in the United States, France, Italy, and Britain. This need not interfere with rising global outputs, and may not even disturb the social fabric unduly, since consumers satisfy wants with absolute, not relative, incomes. But it does suggest that there are a few rocks in the garden. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the new managers, public and private, will use their instruments of control with the requisite degree of skill. President de Gaulle, for example, is hell-bent on decreasing world liquidity to promote some non-economic ends of his own; Prime Minister Wilson sacrificed an extraordinary measure of political and economic freedom to spare Labour from being labeled the party of devaluation; and Messrs. Anderson, Stans, and Saulnier successfully imposed a decline in production despite the lessons learned by their predecessors in the Eisenhower administration. Finally, for all their genuine success, no Western nation has yet developed institutions that combine economic growth at high employment with stable prices.

Nevertheless, after saying all this, it must also be said that in the main Shonfield appears to be right. His argument is strengthened by an extraordinary wealth of relevant detail. Apart from his fine eye for the significant, he has a sound ear that distinguishes important undertones in public rhetoric. He appreciates, for example, the cosy arrangement under which each German steel producer specializes in a particular group of products. The German economy is shot through with such industrial collaboration, nurtured by a few major banks and supported by federal subsidies and tax favors. Shonfield is just as perceptive elsewhere. Thus, he seizes unerringly on the decisive role of Mr. Carli's central bank in Italy, the reluctance of British civil servants to plan coherently, and the important degree of autonomy enjoyed by self-perpetuating corporate managers in the United States.

His RATIONAL bias, however, sometimes betrays him. Above all, he presses the importance of national indicative plans beyond their established worth. The practitioners of this new art, particularly in France, are skillful and persuasive advocates, whose compelling logic may mislead outsiders. First-hand experience can be chastening. My own suggests that the planners understandably tend to overestimate their importance. Shonfield thinks that the new British blueprint developed by the Department of Economic Affairs and the network of "little Neddies" is "potentially an aggressive instrument of government long-range policies." In fact, however, investment programs of British businessmen probably depend much more on the somewhat different signals sounded by DEA's neighbors in the Treasury. This is not surprising, especially since several of the targets in DEA's National Plan—notably the one for productivity—appear to have been designed to impress foreign creditors rather than influence the home audience.

Even in France, the departure of Pierre Massé from the Rue de Martignac has transformed the planners' style. They are turning away from highly coherent, detailed targets and toward much more provisional, broader indicators. In part, they have concluded that too much detail hampers rather than compels performance; in part, the plan itself counts for less with the important state enterprises than do the political decisions taken in the President's Elysée Palace. The planning experiment is far from complete. It may even be that the cruder American approach, relying essentially on fiscal and monetary policy with specific interventions to deal with particular problems, will turn out to be a better model for the West. The trial-and-error technique of large corporations, even those guided by internally developed long-range plans, may create a more fruitful setting for the

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technological inventiveness on which expanding outputs largely depend. But here again, Shonfield is wise and undogmatic. He carefully relates the array of instruments in each country to its own past and warns that no one can borrow wholesale from his neighbors.

A key argument for indicative planning holds that it can solve the nagging problem of price stability. Involve industrial managers and union leaders in the process, the argument goes, and you improve chances for wage and price restraint. However, prices have continued to rise under full employment both in countries that plan explicitly—like Holland, France and Britain—and in those that don't—like Germany and the United States. Shonfield has grasped this point too. The trouble with all incomes policies so far is that they imply the maintenance of the present division of the income pie. There is simply no reason why workers in short supply should be expected to accept this, and they don't. This problem, in turn, is linked to the crucial political question that Shonfield poses: how can concentrated economic decision-making be made responsive to the broader constituency it nominally serves? He seems to think that the French have an answer in the debate that the National Assembly stages over the plan. But no real choice is presented to the Assembly, itself a virtually impotent organ under the Fifth Republic. Moreover, France merely caricatures a state of affairs that is present everywhere in the West, the fading strength of elected parliaments.

Shonfield is aware of this as well, so he suggests that another answer might be "transparent prices"—a shorthand way of saying he would welcome techniques exposing to public examination the elements of economic decision-making in both public and private spheres. In a tentative and unsystematic way, something like this has already been taking place in the United States. Whether or not it improves the quality of decisions or provides a greater measure of public choice, however, is not yet clear.

Despite the differences expressed here, I know of no better description of the existing economic arrangements in the rich West than Shonfield's remarkable book. He combines the skillful reporting of a first-class journalist with the technical competence of a first-class economist. Indeed, he has played both parts, first as economic editor of the *Observer* and now as Director of Studies at the Royal Institute of International affairs. If some of his answers are obviously debatable, Shonfield has clearly raised many of the right questions—and that is no mean achievement.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

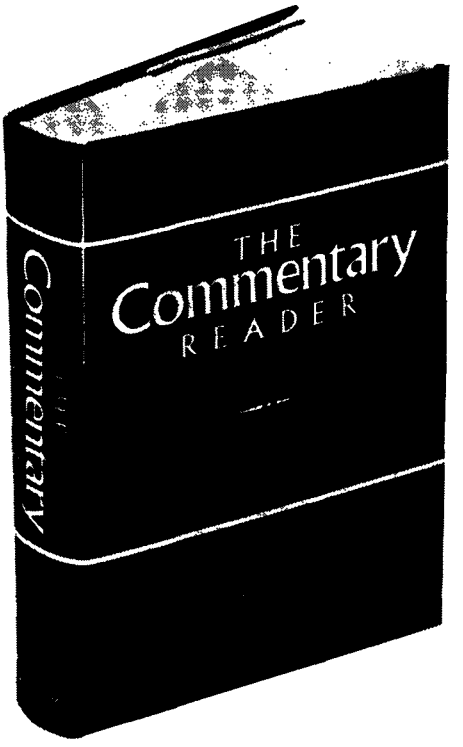
ALICIA OSTRIKER, *a new contributor, teaches English at Rutgers University.*

ERICH ISAAC, *who teaches geography at the City University of New York, contributed "Forbidden Foods" to our January issue.*

HARVEY SWADOS *is the well-known novelist and social critic.*

NEIL COMPTON *is* COMMENTARY*'s regular TV critic.*

BERNARD D. NOSSITER, *author of* The Mythmakers: An Essay on Power and Wealth, *reports from Paris on economic affairs for the* Washington Post.



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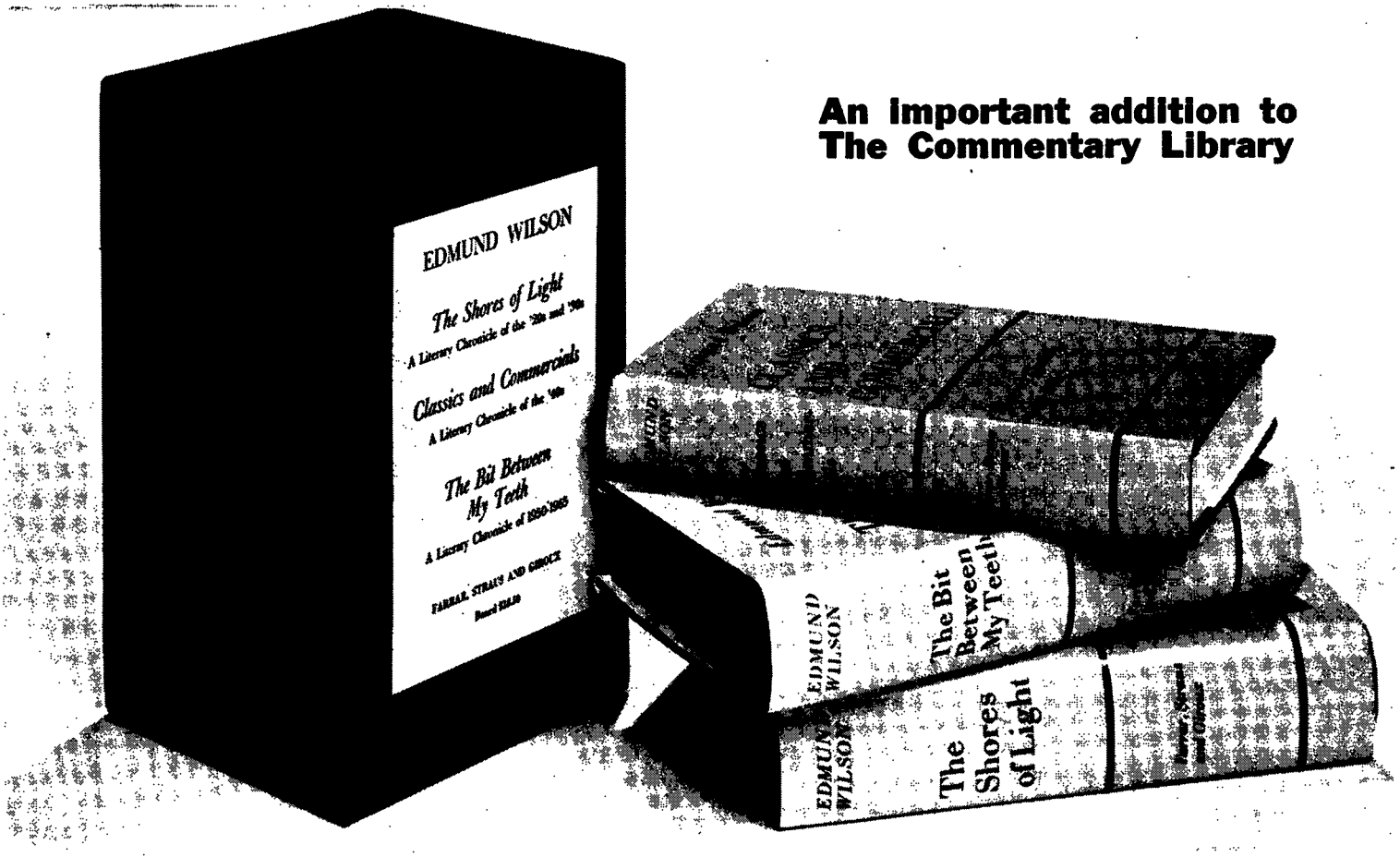
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